







# DAWNINGS OF LIGHT IN THE EAST;

WITH

BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, AND STATISTICAL NOTICES

OF

PERSONS AND PLACES

VISITED DURING A MISSION TO THE JEWS,

IN

PERSIA, COORDISTAN, AND MESOPOTAMIA.

BY

THE REV. HENRY A. STERN.

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Entered according to the Act.

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# PREFACE.

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AT a moment when the public mind is roused, and public attention is attracted to the threatening and tottering position of the East, it cannot fail to be a matter of the deepest interest to the student of prophecy, to turn his gaze from the clouded firmament of the political world, to the moral and religious horizon of those enigmatical personages, who, in the good providence of God, have already, and will yet, on a day not far off, exert a mighty influence upon the destinies of a large portion of these lands. Few Eastern travellers, in their peregrinations, seldom if ever come in contact, or mix with, a people who are considered the basest of the base, and the vilest of the vile; and consequently, in the numerous narratives which have appeared in print, the Jew is never considered worthy of notice; or, if adverted to at all, judged with impartiality. My labours, under the direction of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, led me to visit the various localities where this ill-treated race have, for so many centuries, been the unfortunate objects of insult and oppression, spoliation and massacre; and, though I came with no other commendatory epistles than Bibles and New

Testaments, and no other official firmans than Tracts and Prayer-books, I was invariably received with cordiality and affection ; and was privileged to proclaim to myriads of attentive listeners, both in the synagogues and from house to house, the unsearchable riches of Christ's Gospel.

While I was thus pursuing my work among God's ancient people, to whom I was principally directed " to preach repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," I did not, however, lose sight of the claims of others, but availed myself of every opportunity to point the Armenian and Mahomedan, the Papist and the nominal Protestant, to Him who is " the way, the truth, and the life ;" and I am grateful to add that in many instances my labours in this respect were not in vain in the Lord.

Some of the obstacles with which our mission had to contend in Persia, are incidentally noticed ; I might have been more explicit on the subject, but Christian charity forbids me to dilate on a topic which recalls to my mind so many grievous and painful recollections. Those who were instrumental in driving me and my fellow-labourers from Ispahan, incurred a heavy responsibility, though I am, at the same time, convinced and certain, that if all the enemies of truth, all the haters of the light of the Gospel, and all the abettors of Rome's soul-destroying system, were united together against the spread of Christianity amongst the Jews, their attempts would prove abortive, and the Lamb's

purposes of mercy towards the seed of Abraham obtain their fulfilment.

The few remarks on Nineveh, Babylon, and Persepolis, might have easily been extended; but, as the object of this work was to combine useful information with accurate missionary intelligence, laboured and elaborate archæological disquisitions would have required more time than the author could spare, or would have been consonant with the object which this work, under the blessing of God, is designed to promote.

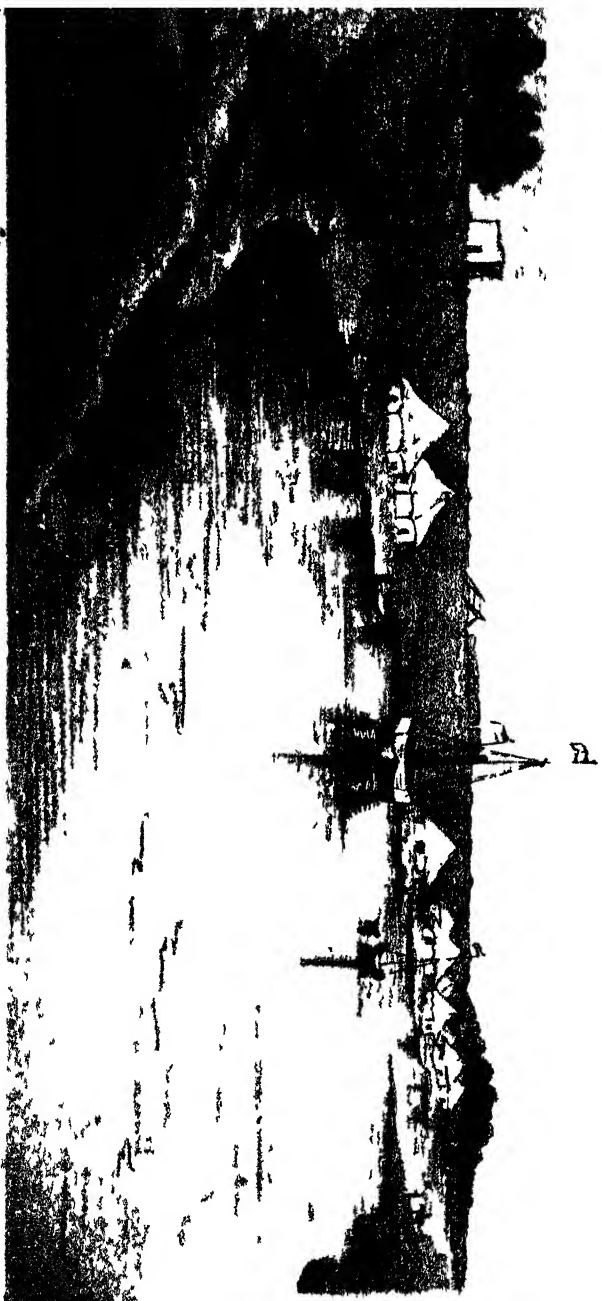
For the sketches the author is indebted to his wife, who accompanied him last January to Hillah and Babylon; some of them were done whenever leisure or less important occupations allowed her to indulge in a little recreation; they do not pretend to any artistic skill, though they are perfect as regards the accuracy of their delineation. For the map which accompanies the work, he is indebted to the skill and kindness of his friend, Mr. Myers, of the London Society's Hebrew School.

The author deems it unnecessary to make any apology for the plainness and unpoetical style of this volume. The Muses were never very kind to him, and even if they had felt some friendship for him, the excessive heat of Bagdad, the sounds of Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian, the only languages which he spoke for eight years—and the primitive aspect of his tented dwelling on the banks of the Tigris, where he encamped for six weeks last summer, when the

greater part of this book was written, — would have proved very unfavourable circumstances for writing the good graces of the delicate daughters of Jupiter. He has, however, endeavoured to give a faithful and unvarnished description of the present position, and prospective hopes of the Jews in Persia, Coordistan, and on the ancient plains of Chaldee; and, if his humble exertions are in the least subservient to the holy and sacred cause near and dear to his heart, it will throw into the shade all the toil and trouble it cost him.

H. S.

BAGDAD,  
*February 4th, 1853.*



ENCAMPMENT AT GABARAIL ON THE TIGRIS.



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## ERRATA.

- Page 17, line 2, *for path, read bath.*  
 Page 27, line 5, *for Rubeiza, read Kubeiza.*  
 Page 75, line 10, *for Calueh, read Calneh.*  
 Page 94, line 2, *for requeest, read request.*  
 Page 95, line 2, *for Naheund, read Nabend.*  
 Page 143, line 17, *for shreik, read shriek.*  
 Page 152, *for Chapter VII., read XI.*

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# DAWNINGS OF LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SETTING OUT FROM DAMASCUS TO BAGDAD.

It was at the close of a sultry day in the month of September, 1844, that myself and party threaded our way through the intricate, gloomy, and dull streets of the "great and sacred" Damascus, towards the eastern gate, to gain the caravan for Bagdad. The evening, after the oppressive heat of the day, was mellow and cool; and the gentle zephyrs, as they wafted through the balmy groves of oranges, lemons, and myrtles, poured most delicious odours through the extended lines of our wide-spreading camp. The air, country, sky, everything, in fact, above, around, and beneath, reminded us that we were in the East, the glowing region of the sun; and I began to contemplate with mingled feelings of joy and delight, pain and sorrow, the moment I should enter the boundless desert, the last barrier between me and the land of my adoption; between me and the scene of my future labours.

The night, as usual among Bedouins, antecedent to a long, wearisome and perilous journey, was noisy and clamorous; here a sheik was arranging and balancing his loads, there another laving the gory backs, or cicatrizing, amidst exquisite tortures,



the inflamed and swollen flesh of his camels, whilst the rest were either bickering, sipping coffee, or meditating over the curling fumes of their *shatabs* (pipes). This life and animation continued till past midnight, and then all gradually became hushed and noiseless; not a soul stirred, and not a voice spake; every one, wrapt in his coarse horse-hair cloak, lay silent and motionless, on the hard bare ground. We were the first astir in this sleeping assemblage, and expected that a general *reveille* would every minute follow, but we were disappointed, the sun rose high in the horizon, the peasants hastened to the yellow fields to gather in the ripe grain, and the half-clad shepherd led his bleating flock to the green pastures, and still our caravan indolently basked in the rays of the sun. I gathered courage, and, as I could not then speak to, I pulled our gruff, grey-bearded sheik; he evidently did not admire this familiarity, but as I could only smile to a flow of curses which I did not understand, he took me by the arm, and pointing towards the desert, indicated that ere many days I should feel less eager to push on.

At ten o'clock the cry *Yallah*, at that time a strange but now, a well-known sound to me, re-echoed through the encampment, and in an instant all was bustle and activity. The camels were soon loaded, Mrs. Vicars placed in her *takhterawan*, Mr. Sternschuss and myself thrown on light-loaded pack-saddles, and every one else mounted according to his purse and agreement, and thus the whole camp, in regular marching order, defiled through the gardens and luxuriant forests of fruit-trees, which, as Orientals say, encircle Damascus "like a pearl surrounded by emeralds."

Our first day was painful and wearisome, the heavy motion of the camel, the uncomfortable position, and the fear of falling every moment with the bulky load on which I was raised, made me feel miserable and wretched; and, with the greatest impatience, I longed to espy the place which would terminate the hardships and toils of the day. At noon we reached the looked-for spot, and as soon as I had alighted I threw myself on the sun-burnt fields, and whilst the servants struck the tents, enjoyed a rest as sweet as on the softest pillow. Towards evening we met together in Mr. Vicars' tent, and related our

adventures of the morning, we all felt that we had entered upon a new scene of life and a new mode of travelling; no longer the sylvan peaks of Lebanon, or the picturesque valleys of Palestine, chequered the landscape, an immense realm of death extended itself on all sides and bounded the distant horizon. Fears and horror filled our minds in gazing over the cheerless expanse, which for thirty days would be measured by our steps; we, however, endeavoured by mutual encouragement to banish the feeling of apathy with which we regarded the primeval plain, and buoyed up our drooping spirits by the consoling promises of Scripture, which, as a heaven of hope, at that time and during my future travels invariably deprived the dreary wilds of their sullen and blasted aspect. The sheik of the caravan had appointed this place for the general rendezvous, but as all the merchandize for Bagdad had not yet been collected, we were obliged to remain encamped in the heated plain till Saturday. During these forty-eight hours we were almost devoured by innumerable swarms of disgusting flies and myriads of humming mosquitoes.

On Saturday morning strings of camels came trudging along the Damascus road. Our drivers immediately ordered us to prepare for marching, and we soon decamped, and in a long file rode off. I was most unfortunate; the drivers gave me a camel which was bruised, wounded, and skinned over the whole of his back. At first I did not notice it, as I mounted with fear and trembling, lest the peculiar motion of the animal should upset me on the hard sun-burnt soil; but we had not advanced far, when a most putrid and fetid smell, as if some pestilential cavern had burst its prison and infected the air, overwhelmed me with an irresistible faintness and languor. I relinquished the grasp with which I held the baggage, which accommodated me instead of a saddle; and removing my legs, I beheld (*Karreses referes*) my trowsers and carpet all covered with the gore of the patient creature. I was shocked at the sight, and immediately entreated the driver to make the camel kneel, that I might dismount; but this unfeeling son of the desert, without listening to my solicitations, amused himself with what he termed Frankish delicacy and effeminacy, and

brutally drove on the suffering animal and his agonized rider. I called for the sheik, but he being on his swift dromedary, was out of the reach of my voice, and could not come to my relief. I collected courage, shifted on the side of the animal, and leaped down, with all the luggage in the train. The driver, dreading the whip which I held in my hand, betook himself to his legs, and was off in an instant; but when at the distance of about a hundred yards, he saw that I was not irritated, nor intended to lash him for his impudence, he approached, crawling and cringing like a true slave. I ordered him to bring me a sound camel, which he immediately did; and with the assistance of two more drivers, the bales were slung across its back, whilst the one I had dismounted, amidst the curses of several Arabs, was driven in the vortex of the caravan.

Our route, which was tedious and monotonous, extended over a stony barren desert, occasionally diversified by a few scattered mounds, which tend more to increase than to lessen the horror of the forlorn plain. All around us wore a dreary aspect: not a shrub or tree enlivened the parched ground, even a blade of green grass or a cankerous weed did not exhilarate the painful sight.

The sun was already in the meridian, and still the village, Maksurah, which we were to reach before noon, was invisible. I began to suspect our sheik's veracity, and concluded that we should not see a human habitation for the next thirty days, when the driver, in whose favour I had by the alluring promise of a *baksheesh* ingratiated myself, approached, and pointing to some hills which were clothed with verdure, and from the distance, under the azure sky, looked like a transparent lake, gave me to understand that this was the *munzil*, or village. We soon reached the village, which, in the shade of leafy trees, and clustering vines, resembled in contrast to the surrounding naked waste a fairy-land and enchanted spot. The inhabitants, attracted by the gaudy coloured *takhterawan*, hastened from their cottages to have a glimpse of this gorgeous spectacle. Both matrons and maidens, alike forgetful of their wonted modesty, threw back their coarse blue veils, and with jealous eyes and gaping mouths, stood gazing on Mrs. Vicars,

who would have gladly exchanged her pompous vehicle for the comforts of the poorest hut. One of these admiring dames exclaimed that the happy occupant was a Persian princess, another that she was the elected of a Bagdad lord, and a third, to whom all the rest paid the utmost attention, (she, no doubt, from her age and general experience being considered the oracle of this rural community,) heaved up a roaring *mashallah*, and decided that the great lady was the wife of an English vizier.

We encamped an hour's distance behind the village, on an elevated pleasant spot, and close to a limpid spring.

During the rest of the afternoon we were pestered by Arab peasants. Some of them brought us tastefully selected boquets of sweet and delicate flowers, others smiling clusters of grapes, for which they expected a handsome remuneration. I fear, however, that their expectations of the generosity of the vizier's lady were disappointed, and their anticipations not realized.

In the evening, the sheik, an old thorough Arab, who for the last half century had traversed the desert in all directions, gave us a friendly notice to be ready to start the next morning. We objected to move on the Lord's-day, and entreated him to delay the departure for twenty-four hours. He at first felt disinclined to yield to (what he considered) an unreasonable request, but when we told him that we considered it wrong to travel on a day which was set apart for the Christian's special worship of God, he laid his hands upon his brow and eyes, and with an inclination of the head, said, with great gravity, "Upon my eyes and head—I am your servant."

About midnight, an escort of fifty *chayals*, or soldiers, who were to conduct the caravan through the desert, arrived in the camp. These noisy companions at once dispelled the pensive silence and solemn quiet of the night, and by their wild shrieks, and savage songs, chased away the peaceful slumbers, in which sleep had bound our worn and wearied limbs. At day-dawn, when the songs of our sentinels were drained and exhausted, and all lay wrapt up in their cloaks on the dew-moisted ground, I got up and took a walk over the naked heath, which was still veiled in the morning vapours.

Here, solitary and alone, far away from the din and turmoil, hatred and strife of clashing interests, the vast, various, and sublime manifestations of the Deity, as seen in the floating cloud, the immeasurable arch, and the mysterious plain, afforded themes of delightful contemplation, which allured the heart to praise, and influenced the soul with a divinity, which, on the busy stage of life, cannot be felt or appreciated.

During the day our camp wore the aspect of general inactivity; the tumultuous clamour of the caravan people was absorbed in deep silence and profound tranquillity; not a profane sound was heard, nor a loud word uttered; all, as if impelled by some secret instinct, endeavoured to do as little violence as possible to the sanctity of the day. Some of the Arabs were sitting in a circle on the hard ground, and with pleasing anticipations dilated on the fights and skirmishes with depredating *Anisee*, whom we should meet in the desert; others, under an awning spread between bales of goods, napped away the silent fleeting hours; whilst a third party passed their *ennui* by performing frequent ablutions, and other laverian purifications, at the spring near our encampment. At sunset all were aroused from their gentle indolence, and the day of sweet rest and calm repose was succeeded by an evening of commotion and bustle, every person was busy, and all hands were employed. The sheiks re-assorted their loads; the sooty slaves filled the *gerbes*, or skins, with water, and the shepherds gave the last scanty meal of chopped straw to the toil-worn camels. When all had finished their various tasks, a crier went round the camp and proclaimed the hour of departure. There is something solemn in the preparations of the caravan antecedent to the decampment; and the heart, though cold as ice, cannot behold the general movement, without feeling some secret emotions of regret at the thought and indications of a speedy departure, from a spot where you have just repaired the exhausted strength of your wearied limbs, and recovered the wasted vigour of your languishing frame. The most friendless wild, on which you enjoyed a little respite from the shaking motion of the camel, and a cooling shade from the glaring sun, becomes endeared to the traveller's bosom, like his *natalo*

*solem*, and he cannot tear himself without a sad countenance from the patch of turf on which he was soundly sleeping a few short minutes ago.

We had a blustering stormy night; our Arab chayals, whose sharp penetrating eyes pierced through the thickest darkness, gave suddenly the signal of alarm, and announced that a body of plundering Arabs were hovering about the hills, north of our encampment. Immediately confusion and terror, with the rapidity of lightning, spread through our caravan; even our intrepid escort, who a few hours before would have ventured to assert that, had they lived in the days of the Macedonian conqueror they would have opposed his victorious eternal phalanx; or, at the time of the Trojan war, dispute with invulnerable Achilles the laurels of his ever-famed valour, stood pale and trembling, as if some magic spell had transfixed them. Our sheiks, expert sons of the desert, whose scars attested their bravery, were not intimidated, nor afraid of any hostile encounter, for without any noise they ordered lances and muskets to be kept ready, a patrol to manœuvre around the camp, and watch-fires to be kindled. The flames soon dispelled the sable night, and disclosed to us the swarthy countenances of the sons of violence and plunder. Our chayals had now again recovered their panic-struck courage, and whizzing sent melted balls over the far resounding plain. The avidity of the predatory Anisee was blunted by these bravados, and none of them would venture to appear from behind their mountain entrenchment. After a short watch, sleep, that annihilator of cares and troubles, overwhelmed our caravan people, and in less than an hour nothing but the dim flickering watch-fires, encompassed by half-sleeping guards, marked the apprehensions of danger. The excitement and consternation, which had most effectually operated upon our nerves, also soon subsided, and though defenceless travellers in a strange land and foreign clime, and among a rapacious and cruel people, whose ferocity and fanaticism we alike dreaded, we laid ourselves down upon our carpets, and slept securely under the canopy of heaven; conscious that He who called us to His work, would watch over

us during our solitary wanderings in the desert, and not suffer the lawless sons of Ishmael, or the devotees of the Arabian prophet, to do us any harm. The night at length waned, and the bright morning star, which rose, brilliant and glittering, in the serene and cloudless sky, gave the caravan people the signal to leave their hard beds and prepare to start. All was soon life and animation in our encampment. Some of the camels groaned forth from their twisted necks mournful complaints against their unjust masters, who overburdened their fractured backs with unmerciful loads; others, with a mysterious silence, followed the plaintive notes of the shepherds. One sheik cursed his slave for not having better filled his water-skins; another, with an uplifted club, threatened his tardy shepherds, if they did not hasten on; all was noise and disorder, here was a cry for a camel, there after a bag containing provisions.

With great difficulty I got a camel, ordered the driver to sling an easy load across his back, and, throwing my carpet and pillow on the top of it, I mounted, and in an instant it jumped up and walked off. As everything must terminate, so also recrimination and blustering sounds in our caravan abated, and the whole train, consisting of four hundred and fifty camels, fifty dromedaries, a few horses, and about one hundred and fifty persons, full of gaiety and life, set forward. The motion of the caravan in the pathless desert presented a striking spectacle. First proceeded fifty chayals mounted on swift dromedaries, equipped and provided with all sorts of defensible weapons; next came the main *bataille*, in far extended fronts, and which moved in such regular order, that one might have rolled a ball through the whole line between the legs of the camels. On the flank rode the sheiks, mounted on horseback, or well trained dromedaries, with long lances and rusty muskets, sedate countenances and vigilant eyes, like undaunted commanders of a fearless army; and last of all came *cajavos*, the *takhterawan*, and a string of camels who were kept in reserve to supply the place of those who might fall from fatigue and exhaustion.

The whole of this extensive body trudged along so quietly that the rustling of the dry weeds could be distinctly discerned.

The most heavy burdened camels, quite bending under their unsparing loads, trod over the gravelly soil, with their elastic spongy feet, with the ease and noiselessness of the agile antelope, or the sailing cloud.

Before the sun rose, our march, under the refreshing and invigorating cool breeze, which dashed through the narrow clefts of the hills and blew upon us with a cutting sharpness, was pleasant and agreeable; but no sooner did this luminary rise in his bright car from behind his purple curtain, and dissolve the misty vapours under whose grey shade we were riding, than the sky like a glowing furnace shed a scorching heat over us, which I thought at the moment, would dry up the last drop of blood within my veins. As the sun rose higher our misery increased, the vertical rays which before enfeebled my nerves, now fed with such a fervour upon me, that they made my brain nearly boil, and my head dizzy. Burning thirst and distracting glare, the two satellites of the dismal desert, also began to make us experience their irresistible effects; and I felt almost persuaded that my constitution, exhausted by a serious sickness in Beyrout, would not be able to endure the hardships and trials of a long desert journey. But how little does mortal man know of futurity, and how often must the humbling confession be extorted that prescience belongs not to a finite creature, but to an omniscient God. The very journey which I apprehended would terminate my existence, I bore better than any one of my companions, and the strength which a dangerous malady had enervated a few weeks before, and which I thought would be entirely gone, I recruited in the much dreaded waste. "O Lord, how unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out."

In the hasty, tumultuous departure of the caravan I carelessly forgot to provide myself with a *matarah*, or leather bottle for water, and now thirst, that implacable enemy of the regions of death, parched my lips, and imposed on me a most bitter penance for my negligence. I tried to dismount and procure a bottle from the servants, but my camel, as I had neither stick nor bridle, most arbitrarily maintained its control over me, and would neither listen to my foreign accent and kneel, nor move



out of its rank. I called my own servant, but he being far behind, the sound died away in the air before it reached him. Five or six biscuits, on which I intended to breakfast, I promised to the driver if he would bring me a *matarah*; the poor famished fellow immediately ran to one of the servants and brought me a half-filled bottle, but my thirst was so great that this large quantity was scarcely sufficient to allay the yearning of my feverish burning lips.

The misery of this ever lingering day appeared constantly to increase; my brain was on fire, my eyes inflamed, my right leg entirely blistered, and, from chafing backwards and forwards, the skin ripped open, which caused most acute pains. Ardently I longed to see this protracted stage over; but noon passed, the sun declined, the glare vanished, and still the caravan pursued with unabated ardour its toilsome trudge over the sun-heated waste. I already despaired that either the caravan would stop or the evening set in, when, to my greatest joy, the anxiously looked-for moment arrived, and the caravan abruptly halted. We were all soon down from our lofty seats and enjoying the luxury of rest; I threw myself on the bare soil, and reposed in the cool shades of the evening. I slept several hours, and believe my languishing frame and shattered constitution would have enjoyed a much longer rest, had not the servant, in a gruff tone, requested me to take some refreshment. I reluctantly left my clayey couch, and joined the rest of my party, who, like myself, wearied and fatigued, felt more inclined to lie down than partake of a frugal repast. Our simple meal was soon over, but we had not yet risen from the carpet on which we sat, when several of our caravan people squatted down near us, and entertained themselves with dilating on the misery of a young Turk, who from over-exertion remained behind, and was left for dead on the spot on which he sank. This discourse attracted our attention, and we interrogated them about the poor fellow, whose misery appeared to excite so little compassion in their flinty breasts; and with perfect indifference they related to us the following tragical story.

A poor Turk from the neighbourhood of Mosul having deserted the cruel service of the Turkish militia, availed

himself of our caravan to regain the family, from whose bosom he had been violently torn. The few piastres in his possession were expended in the last village, and twenty-five days of misery and starvation awaited him in the desert. Fear, however, impelled him onwards, and he exerted his last physical powers to escape the jaws of the law and the punishment of his desertion. But famine and thirst, a greater tyrant than the bastinado, pursued him, till wearied and exhausted he sunk under the scorching beams of a relentless sun ; and, added our Arabs, with a shrug of their shoulders, most probably his mortal career is finished.

My mind revolted and recoiled at the monstrous barbarity which thus wantonly could suffer a fellow-creature and a co-religionist to perish, without extending to him that little succour which might have protracted his existence and saved him from a premature grave. How cruel is Islamism, and how unworthy of the Deity must that religion appear to every thinking mind, which while it enjoins charity, allows its devotees to trample on the laws of nature ; to fan and enflame the spirit of revenge, the very bane of social and refined intercourse. We instantly tried to dispatch some Arabs in search of the unfortunate sufferer, but these obstinate and inflexible savages, impenetrable to persuasion, could not suppress their galling animosity, and render a kind office to one who unhappily belonged to the Osmanlis, the formidable usurpers of their throne and the encroachers on their liberty.

The wretched condition in which the poor man had been left behind, affected us most sensibly, and we felt it a duty to do something to afford him relief, and save, if possible, his life. But another difficulty arose, no one would stir or move in our camp ; I requested the servant to get his gun ready and accompany me in my search. This disinterested kindness of a "Christian barbarian" towards "a true believer," made the Arabs, in whose breasts sanguinary vengeance had not yet extinguished every spark of humanity, blush and feel abashed, and two of them offered to accompany the servant if we would give them a *baksheesh*. We immediately accepted their conditional service, and all three set out on their humane expedition.

It was about ten o'clock when they left, and we certainly did not expect them back before one or two, when suddenly, pale and trembling, they rushed into the encampment, and related that they had been strolling all over the desert, (although they had not been absent above an hour,) and would still have gone further, had they not seen a body of about a hundred horsemen, which expedited their return in order to give timely notice to the caravan. The sheiks, who know every spot in the desert, and have information about the various movements of their erratic brethren, would not listen to this report, or rise from the carpets on which they reclined. Several of the credulous however, crowded around these messengers of evil, and with wide distended mouths and staring eyes, gazed, full of fear, at each other, as if they had been reared in a comfortable parlour and luxurious nursery, and not in *Al-Dchesira*. To the amazement of all, we smiled at the eloquence which was vainly used to persuade us that robbers were hovering near the camp; and in the certain assurance that He at whose bidding we traversed the perilous waste, would protect and keep us, we laid down and endeavoured to get a little rest. Our valiant Arabs followed our example, and soon by their nasal sounds demonstrated that fear was no antidote to sleep.

Our interval of repose was very short, for at half-past three we moved again. We had eleven weary hours before us, whose tediousness nothing could lessen or mitigate. I was now able to enter into the feelings of the Israelites, who in their journeyings in the parched and sandy wilderness longed for the flesh-pots of their bondage, and would gladly have endured the agonies of a second servitude rather than a desert independence. I could sympathize with the keen disappointment of these emigrating tribes, when, instead of a land flowing with milk and honey, they had to traverse a frightful waste, diversified by a few tamarisk bushes and the prickly camel-thorn. We were ourselves all inclined to murmur, and many times we regretted having taken this route in the company of avaricious savages, whose ferocity and insensibility we rather dreaded than admired. The romance of an Arabian night tale, which once beguiled the idle hours of boyhood, lost its charm in this tenantless

waste, and neither the docile camel, the swift dromedary, the prancing steed and the quivering lance, afforded me any interest. I was looking forward with strong feelings of emotion for the halting place, and had it not been for fear of dying from want of water, I would certainly have left the caravan and retraced my way back again to Damascus. My mind and body sympathized with each other, for whenever I soothed myself with the idea that evening after all must come, another distracting thought reminded me that I had more than twenty such days before me, the discomforts of which would be constantly aggravated. Thus with the pennant of hope half-mast high, the unconscious camel, ignorant of the misery of its rider, walked steadily along without ever deviating from the path or moving out of the string. Towards evening the heat began to abate, and a grateful breeze wafted a little fresh air along our lines, and gave new energy both to man and beast.

At sunset the rising dust and the rolling columns of smoke indicated that the van had encamped; we soon came up, and in a few minutes all was quiet and silent. The camels were drawn aside to graze on the few withered shrubs and thorny weeds they could find, and both the speculating merchant and the crawling slave stretched themselves, the one on his soft carpet, and the other on the hard soil, to enjoy a grateful repose. After an hour's rest, the fires were lighted and culinary activity commenced. It was a cheering sight to walk around the encampment and see the various groups huddled round the blazing fires, baking bread, sipping coffee, and smoking pipes; a stirring and novel scene of life, and a world in miniature in a vast barren thirsty region. Yet even in this silent waste the greatest distinction of birth and station was observed. The rich and wealthy sat calm and collected, partaking of the pillaw and sherbets, which the cringing slaves placed abundantly before them, whilst the poor crouched around the inviting board to catch the crumbs which fell from the great man's table. All was order and decorum, as if the safety of each depended on the general welfare of the community.

Our time for sleep was usually very limited, sometimes we started at two, three, or four o'clock, very seldom later, and then

we never halted till sun-set. On the 25th, our sheik brought the welcome intelligence that we should have only four hours' march to the stage; no news ever afforded me greater satisfaction. I mounted my camel with fresh glee and buoyancy. The whole caravan appeared animated by the same happy feelings, and songs and lively conversations resounded from every moving group; even our camels, who seemed to smell the distant water, shared the good spirit which pervaded the mass, walked with rapidity, and made longer paces than usual. Whilst we were thus defying glare and dust, a sudden halt was ordered, and the cry of robbers simultaneously resounded from every file and party.

Arabs! robbers! was now the watchword. Disorder and confusion prevailed in the whole caravan; some looked after their bales to see if they were all complete, others were quarrelling, whose camel should form the *avant garde*, whilst a few poor travellers clung to their carpet bags, with a desperation which evidently showed that all their worldly wealth were contained therein. The din and wail rung over the far-extended plain and fell grating on the air. The sheiks, who had at the rumour of thieves immediately scoured the wide waste to reconnoitre their dreaded enemies, came back, and in an instant order was restored; all that had arms were commanded to form a close line with the soldiers. The guns were unslung, pistols primed, swords unsheathed, and every other missile weapon undauntedly tossed with a defying mien in the air. It was a magnificent sight to see upwards of a hundred men all armed with lances, clubs, swords and daggers, dashing over the wide plain, uttering the savage war whoop. As we approached the wells, the consternation and noise increased, all was wild disorder; the dromedaries of the sheiks were sauntering backwards and forwards, now they were in front, then again in the rear; some Arabs were throwing aside their loose garments, others were filling them with small stones to ward off the expected enemy; shrieks and yells burst from every throat, and everything indicated the approach of a desperate foe. But what was my amazement, when instead of a devouring fiend, we met a downcast, desponding sheik, who had been

plundered of camels and goods, and sat bemoaning his irretrievable loss.

The unfortunate man now regretted that he had left the caravan in order to be first at the water, and by the life of his prophet averred that he would never commit such an imprudence again. A general consultation was instantly held, and the caravan basher, the most venerable sheik, was requested to meet one of the robbers at a distance and parley with him. The messenger was immediately dispatched to the *Anizee*, who soon returned, and half an hour afterwards we saw an Arab walking not far from our encampment with a proud and overbearing air, as if he was thinking, "I am monarch of all I survey." One sheik, clad in a tunic, so as to prevent his concealing any weapons, timidly approached; they both sat down on a patch of green weeds, and like old friends engaged in a lengthened amiable chat. The sheik returned again, took a complete piece of red cloth, a few coffee cups, tobacco, pipes, &c., and laden with these, to an Arab, invaluable articles, settled with the ambassador of the robbers, and in a few hours the stolen camels, divested of their merchandize, were brought back to their disconsolate owner. The affair was transacted in such a short interval of time, and with so much composure, that I really could not help admiring the diplomatic tact of these descendants of Ishmael.

Our adventure occupied the minds and tongues of all till night, when sleep, the soother of every care and suspender of all toil, invaded our encampment, and unconsciously lulled every one, except a few sentinels, into soft and calm repose. We enjoyed our sleep till the summons, "Up, and be doing," roused us to activity. Rest had effected a wonderful renovation among our spiritless travelling companions, and the merriest sounds and wildest songs were heard in the camp. Every one considered it a duty to be noisy: here one was collecting his luggage, and cursing his fortune for going through the desert—there another, amidst the vehement laughter of the drivers, fell from his camel—in another place, was a merchant quarrelling with his sheik about a sick camel; the merchant refused to commit himself and his little property on the hump of a fainting and

staggering animal, and the sheik swore that it was the best in the caravan, the merchant threatened, the sheik grew obstinate and enforced his command with a club, and the merchant, fearing the overwhelming force, vociferated furiously, and vowed eternal vengeance by the life of Allah and Mahomet. Biting and bickering sounds reverberated from every little cluster of animated beings, till all entered on the trackless path, when the turmoil, as by a magical influence, subsided, and every one forgot his grief, either in eating, smoking, or telling an adventurous story. The sheiks alone were the most thoughtful, they trudged along in a profound reverie, which was only interrupted when they rested to sip a little coffee. This delicious beverage generally exhilarated their spirits, and I was frequently amused to see a few tall thin sheiks alighting from their dromedaries, and opening the little bag which contained the apparatus. It consisted of a small copper pot, several cups, and a tin of pounded coffee. A handful of dry weeds or shrubs supplied the fuel, and in ten minutes the black contents were ready and drunk.

Occasionally, one or two of the most dignified individuals in the caravan were favoured with a thimble-full, and they felt that a great honour had been conferred upon them. To-day our sheik invited me to partake with him an hospitable cup; I gladly accepted the proffered compliment, more for the sake of the rest than a predilection for the mocha bean. I had only been on the burning sand a second or two, when, overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, I closed my eyes. Sheik Abdal Kerim, my pretended friend, shook me by the shoulders, and with a kind, though rough lift, raised me from my half-dreamy state. Mechanically I mounted, and as the caravan was about ten minutes in advance, one of the drivers, who had remained in the rear, jumped at the same moment upon the back of my tractable beast, and, to my great annoyance, kept me close company. I remonstrated—he laughed—I moved on the side—he clung faster to me—and before I could get rid of him I had sufficient cause to regret having partaken of the black juice of Arabia.

There is nothing more offensive to the senses, in the desert,

than a camel, after a few days march, without water, and an Arab without his path. The former, after being without food or water for several days, has the obnoxious smell of a walking carcase. I was often obliged to have recourse to a bribe in order to be led out of the string, either in front, flank, or rear, just as the wind blew, so as to escape the painful effects of the putrified effluvia, with which these worn out animals poisoned the air. The latter, from the moment he enters upon a journey till he reaches the place of destination, never thinks of washing, or changing his dress; he has one coarse shirt, and this remains on him till it actually is so filthy and tattered that it would not be bought in the lowest rag-shop of London. Still he is happy; his mind is buoyant, his spirit serene, and his heart gay: he knows no sorrow, and seldom suffers care to rankle in his bosom. His horse or camel, lance or sword, is all his ambition; his consciousness of freedom, and his sense of untrammelled liberty, makes him triumph over the meaner thoughts and corrupt passions which pester walled towns and thriving cities. The dreary desert is his home, his tent his friendly hearth, and the whole clan his family; the present is unruffled, and the future full of ideal prospects and ennobling hopes. Those who come in contact with the inhabitants of towns, form a striking contrast to those who have passed their days under the calm, serene, and cloudless sky of an illimitable desert. The former are mean, sordid, crafty, and cunning deceivers; the latter bold, intrepid, and undaunted asserters of their unfringed freedom. They rob and plunder without ever considering their acts as criminal; they boast of their marauding exploits, as the brave soldier of his valiant deeds. Amongst some of the erratic tribes, a woman would deem it a disgrace to link her fortune to one who has not distinguished himself as a daring freebooter.

There is one redeeming quality amongst the migratory tribes, they consider their pledge as sacred; and a true-bred descendant of Ishmael will never give his promise, or eat bread and salt under your roof, without protecting you with all his influence and power. On one occasion I had several Arabs in my house, with whom I was arranging to go to



Bussorah ; whilst we were striking the bargain, my servant brought coffee, the compliment paid to natives, but they refused to drink ; he then brought bread and dates, but they declined to eat : this appeared rather suspicious, and I postponed my agreement. A few days after, one of their friends informed me that their object was to strip me of all my effects near Sook-u-Shiukh, and then leave me to find my way to Bussorah alone. Some of our companions in the desert would gladly have followed the habits of their people, and taken *souvenirs* from us, but the sheiks would have injured their character and exposed themselves to serious consequences, and this blunted their cupidity and fettered their hands.

Our route increased in interest as we advanced ; we were now approaching the mighty remains of Tadmor, Palmyra, the City of Pillars, and the pride of the renowned Zenobia. From the distance we could see, in the far horizon, the dark shadowy mountains which cover this empire of ruins, appearing larger than they were in reality, whilst their shapeless summits shrouded in dusky vapour, through which now and then the sun pierced, gave the whole landscape a most beautiful aspect. We encamped, past mid-day, in a juxtaposition with Palmyra ; I could, with my telescope, almost count the shattered and standing pillars, which, like a motionless forest, obscured the blue horizon. My anxiety to visit the far-famed desolation was intense, and as soon as our camels were unloaded, and tents struck, I hastened to the sheik for an escort. The old Arab was quite surprised at my hurry, and with a sarcastic smile replied, "The stones have no wings, and what you intend to see to-day can be postponed till to-morrow." Remonstrance with an idle indolent party of Arabs, after a long march, would have been unavailable, and perhaps have only excited their virulence, so I retired to my tent, feasting my imagination with the delightful sight which would regale my eyes the succeeding morning.

According to the sheik's promise, long before the sun had pierced the golden clouds which shaded its rising, I was again with him. He was just engaged in sipping his eternal coffee, and apparently in good humour. I was requested to sit down

on his carpet, but apologized, telling him that the sun would not wait for me; and as it would soon get hot, I was anxious to start at once for Tadmor.

"Tadmor," exclaimed he, "'Agaiab,' don't you know that the Anizee are encamped there, who, by the life of my beard, will make you prisoner."

"If they do, sheik, you have nothing to risk."

"Marshallah, have I not eaten your bread and salt, and are you not my son? Nothing to risk! My face would be as the blackness of night if anything unpleasant occurred to you."

"Sheik, you have sworn and pledged yourself in Damascus to conduct me to Palmyra, and a true son of Ishmael never perjures himself."

"I will fight every son of the Anizee; I will shed every drop of my blood in your defence; I will heap sorrow and woe upon your enemies."

And all this, with many other bold asseverations, he made with such a serious air, look, and gesture, quite peculiar to the imperturbable inhabitants of the desert,\* that I almost credited what he averred. But still I would not yield entirely to his evasions, and therefore with an unwavering determination insisted upon an escort to accompany me. This exhausted his patience, and with a sudden impulse he sprung from his seat, and bellowed out, loud enough to be heard throughout the whole camp, "You can take all the soldiers; but if the Anizee surprise us, and seize all we have, you will incur the responsibility."

He had scarcely uttered these words when scores of voices opposed the proposition, and as my own party coincided with the majority I was obliged to succumb. I afterwards engaged two peasants from Palmyra to conduct me there and back, but a short whispered conversation with the sheik produced a refusal to do so. I now resigned myself to my forlorn hopes and sat down on the shaft of a polished pillar, and, with strained eyes, endeavoured to gain a distinct glimpse of the broken columns, mutilated sculptures, and shivered white porticos of the celebrated city of Zenobia—the Tadmor in the wilderness. This renowned capital, whether founded by

Solomon or a subsequent ruler, is in every respect worthy of the fame which history and antiquity have assigned to it. Its very position is sufficient to fill one with admiration and amazement—a splendid town in a desert solitude—luxurious marble palaces in a region of death. We halted near the site of this fallen and subverted fairy scene two days. We had now five tedious and wearisome stages to accomplish before we could again replenish our water-skins, this made every one careful to guard well his precious liquid. In the evening, my servant, a dull, unthinking Israelite, quite an anomaly, informed me that he had lost my carpet-bag, containing my whole travelling paraphernalia. I acquainted the sheik with the accident; and when the whole caravan were sitting over their evening repast, a crier went round, and on the top of his voice inquired after the missing article, promising a handsome reward to the honest restorer. There was a great deal of chatting and talking among the various groups, but the eighth commandment was evidently not practised at Al-Dchesira, for I never saw my bag again.

The next morning, with the grey streaks of a dubious light, we were again on our trackless path. We travelled sixteen hours, an exertion which utterly prostrated many of the camels. Whole strings, only with great difficulty, limped along, and several we were obliged to leave a prey to wild beasts and carrion birds. We alighted at sun-set, and I observed all our quadrupeds, as by instinct, kneeling in a crescent, and raising imploring looks to their masters for relief from their heavy burthens. The long stage, heat, and glare, had drained all our strength and energy. Mrs. Vicars was dangerously ill; Mr. Sternschuss, from the chafing of the pack-saddle, lame; and my eyes so inflamed that I could not distinguish the nearest object: in fact, we were the pictures and personifications of misery. The servants were, of course, as tired as their masters, and the midnight hour had long passed before any culinary implements cheered the glowing embers.

On the fifth day after leaving Tadmor, we reached Vaarah. On this last day's journey we lost nineteen camels. It was a painful sight to see these poor animals dragging along their

worn-out frames, till entirely exhausted they fell to rise no more. The sheiks seldom endeavoured to lift a camel after it lay down, they only unslung its load, and then abandoned the moaning beast to the struggles of death till it expired. The drivers alone manifested the greatest sympathy, they sang, patted, and caressed the agonized creatures, and the least unkindness they would resent with most bitter curses, and not unfrequently with heavy blows. During the last few hours the solemn steps of our caravan, the plaintive notes of the shepherds, and the gloomy countenances of the leaders, indicated the depressed state of our cavalcade, and I am certain that another day's exertion would have marked with fearful traces the route along which our march extended. Towards night we came to Vaarah, and the joy at the sight of water was inexpressible. The sheiks and their slaves, in a second, had converted their cloaks into troughs, and amidst a most confused excitement allayed with the green and stagnant liquid the feverish thirst of man and beast. I imitated the example of other travellers, and like a true philosopher, indifferent to the shrieks and yells around, pressed a passage through the impatient crowd, and gulphed down the unpalatable stuff. The bustle and clamor did not subside till late in the night, all lungs appeared then exhausted, and had any of the Anizce or *Shamar* Arabs invaded our camp, they might have carried off ~~the~~ camels and their loads without awaking any one.

The following day we did not travel, but lingered away the time between sleeping, reading, and writing, and many other little occupations to which a journey in the desert subjects the traveller. With dawn the next morning we were again on the road. We had a fifteen hours' tract before us, long enough to appal the stoutest heart. The heat was quite insupportable, and a strong simoon blowing with great violence, aggravated our sufferings. My face was blistered, my lips crusted, and my mouth filled with sand, and dreadfully parched. I felt as if in a burning furnace. My boots became too narrow, so that in riding I pulled them from my feet, and almost every other heavy article of dress I threw from my feverish frame. In my agony I recollected that my *matarah* still contained a little water, this I applied to

my racked and giddy head, and experienced a grateful relief. Some of my fellow-travellers covered themselves with their cloaks and other garments, that gave them the appearance of bales of cotton. Even the camels were annoyed by the hot sand, and became unwilling to proceed. This withering blast continued till sun-set; whilst it lasted the desert had the appearance of a vast rolling sea, dotted with innumerable circling eddies, or so many masses of conglomerated vapours, which under the gloomy lustre of the sun assumed the most fantastical shapes and grotesque forms. The intensely hot storm of the day was succeeded by a delightfully calm evening, and the ardent toil was forgotten under the invigorating influence of a cool breeze and a refreshing cup of tea. Late in the evening I stretched myself on a patch of grass, which was evidently struggling with the encroaching sand, and watched the brilliant stars, as by groups they arose and illuminated the azure vault of heaven. Nothing indeed could exceed the exquisite beauty of these hours; the rest after painful exertions, the fresh air after the burning blasts, and the revived and renewed feeling of all the senses, were a luxury which I cannot describe.

Let those that revel in easy, joyous and downy affluence, freely indulge in their soft and enervating pleasures; the unbounded desert, with all the hardships and difficulties of a cheerless solitude, has attractions which fascinate and charm as much as the glittering and gay circles of the festive hall and joyous apartments. The very thought of dangers and trials, privations and annoyances, in the midst of an untenanted surface, elevates the mind, solemnizes the heart, and leads the whole man to depend and rely on that Being whose presence fills with sustaining confidence the desponding spirit.

I was sitting up late, and consequently my short rest had to do penance for it. We proceeded at three o'clock, A.M. I was so heavy and drowsy that I anticipated every instant a roll on the ground. Travelling on horses and mules is not very pleasant by night, but on a camel it is quite agonizing. His heavy motion, and difficulty of balancing his body in descending any elevation, always exposes the rider to the pleasant experiment of tumbling clean over his ears. Unfortunately I

tried this movement ; my camel in descending a slight declivity rested against another one, the baggage moved on the side, and whilst I endeavored to steady myself, the whole cargo came in a train down with me to the ground. Two of the drivers hastened to my assistance, and whilst they were blessing the day and cursing the night, in one and the same breath, I was expeditiously loaded on my groping animal, and mercilessly driven forward. Some of my fellow travellers amused themselves with my misfortune ; but before many hours passed we descended a hill, and amidst the most immoderate shouts and laughter of the drivers, three Albanians and two Arabs were measuring their full length upon the gravelly soil. They were not so fortunate as myself, for all of them were bruised and wounded, and the driver of my string added to their agonizing vexation and pain, by sarcastic cutting reflections that they were either bad Mussulmen or possessed unlawful property ; “ For how can it be otherwise,” remarked this philosophizing Arab, “ a Gaour (Christian) falls in the darkness of night, on a bad piece of road, and is uninjured ; you tumble in the bright daylight on good ground and are almost killed. Wallah, you must be illegitimate offspring.”

The misery of these poor people excited not a little merriment among the pedestrian part of the caravan, and had not the sheiks interfered, I believe the life-sized figures of a few Stamboulees, and Bagdadees, would have been impressed on the sand.

There is no animal more irascible than an Arab. The smallest trifle will put him out of temper, and excite his rage and passion. I have frequently seen parties of these swarthy sons of Ishmael, sitting together engaged in most amicable and friendly conversation, when suddenly a mortified look, or an ambiguous expression, interrupted the harmony, and the social party separated as the bitterest enemies, and most implacable foes. These ebullitions of resentment among people of one tribe, generally do not last long : a sheep, a little coffee, a pipe, or even the gift of a handsome maiden, according to the rank of the offended party, will bury all resentment in oblivion, and effectually cement the bond of union among the conflicting

individuals. But if disputes or quarrels arise between different tribes, the least spark is fanned into a flame, and each will wage eternal war and inextinguishable animosity against the other; and as the vindictive feeling of the uncultivated, unrefined heart is fed by every incident, the most trivial offence or aggression will bring the whole artillery of malice into the field, and both parties will involve themselves in a bloody, ruinous war. In the Persian Gulf I have frequently seen, on account of trifles, whole districts in the most devastated condition: the cattle had been killed, the fields with their harvest burned, many of the houses demolished, and the inhabitants reduced to indigence and poverty. A feud, once stirred up among different clans, will flame beyond the bounds of place and time; and, to the latest generation, the hearts of the children will dilate on vengeance, till hate and strife, unrestrained, are once more let loose, and then both tribes, plunged in a bloody contest, expedite their mutual ruin and destruction. The jarring element of dissension lit in our caravan, at first affected only a few, but now, like a fire among combustible materials, it rapidly spread, and threatened a general outburst of animosity, when suddenly a black flag, the signal of danger, was hoisted aloft, and a peremptory halt ordered. All jealousy and rancour were instantaneously hushed, and both the merchant and his slave, the sheik and his servant, united in the greatest harmony to oppose the common enemy. The thrilling and appalling cry of danger had a magical influence upon every one; and, though I did not see or hear the approach of a hostile party, still my feelings partook of the general panic. The very anticipation of an inimical encounter in an open untenanted waste, far from any human habitation, and in the midst of a wild barbarous people, is sufficient to fill the heart with terror, and swell the breast with fear; but the horror of a desert attack is increased by the unexpected and sudden appearance of the foe. One looks in all directions to discern and espy the dreaded enemy, but nothing is seen or heard except the illimitable plain, and the hum of countless insects. All is silent, as if the icicles of death had congealed the very

life-spring of nature, when, with the rapidity of lightning, a little cloud arises behind a hill, and, in a second, twenty, thirty, and then scores of horsemen dash, with foaming steeds, and trembling lances, over the wide-extending ground. I could not conjecture from whence the assault was expected, but my servant, agitated and pale, in a few incoherent and hurried words, gave me to understand that the sheiks had seen fire. I looked in the direction pointed out, and, at an immense distance, noticed a lurid cloud of smoke, rising at certain intervals, from the level plain. The excitement, which this unexpected discovery caused, gave place to more deliberate consultations, and at last it was concluded that we should boldly face the enemy. The caravan advanced under the depressing consciousness which fear inspires. The day had already far advanced, but no one felt exhausted, or weary; all in anxiety to escape the marauding wanderers, forgot the pain and sufferings to which fourteen hours' journey had exposed them. The sun, at last, set behind a beautiful atmosphere of purple and gold, but the caravan moved on; the gentle twilight fell around us, still our progress continued uninterrupted; the twinkling stars arose and sparkled in the blue sky; the steps of our camels became feeble and almost tottering, yet there was no sign of a halt; nine, half-past nine, and ten o'clock passed; suddenly we descended into a deep dell, encircled by round-backed tumuli, covered with soft, tender verdure. Here, exclaimed the sheiks, we are safe; and, in the delicious enjoyment of our fear-emancipated hearts, we slept tranquil and undisturbed several hours.

With the morning star we rose again. My stiff and motionless servant was quite unwilling to get up; his head, legs, neck, and shoulders, were all in pain, and he requested me to let him die in the desert; I had no inclination to yield to his wish, and, per force, roused him. The poor man, in assaying to open his eyes, fell twice over cumbersome bales and boxes. With promises and entreaties, I succeeded in setting aright his wandering senses; and, to revenge himself, he insisted on making coffee. I readily indulged him in this whim; and in an unusually short time, the black juice was



ready and drunk. Our route, during the day, was most circuitous and tedious; the caravan-bashee, in his solicitude for our safety, led us over quite an unbeaten track, where the hard soil was in many places fissured, broken, and torn, and the unwary traveller, who forgot to keep a strict equilibrium, had to smart for his negligence on the unimpressible clods. We were, also, greatly tantalized by that most deceptive phenomenon, the *serab*. I was perfectly well acquainted with this atmospheric delusion, still I could not resist my natural impulse, and twice asked whether we were not approaching a lake shaded by trees, and a belt of tastefully ranged shrubberies. This curious refraction grievously disappoints the way-worn pilgrim, who yearns for fresh water, and a shady retreat. Parched, exhausted, and fatigued, his eyes wander over the glaring plain, and, to his delight, he beholds a vast lake, inviting groves, houses and domes in countless multitude; his steps become more elastic, his mind more exhilarated, now he approaches the fairy spot, he already in imagination swallows the delicious draught, and reposes under umbrageous trees, when, lo! the beautiful delusion is dissolved, and the oasis in the desert is only a phantom vision.

Sickness, the invariable consequence of long privation and indigestible food, also began to make impetuous inroads in our travelling community. Mrs. Vicars was dangerously ill; a robust Albanian in the gripe of death; and two Bagdadees gasping for breath, and filling the air with groans and shrieks of despair. Every hour a camel sunk exhausted near the putrified remains of carcases, which had been left by previous caravans. The sweet fountains of sympathy and pity were closed by selfishness, and the lesson of mercy unheeded by Christians and Mahomedans. The helpless sick were driven forward, contorted with spasms and delirious with fever. We entreated the sheiks to shorten the stage, but all supplications were in vain. The camels rapidly diminished, and all the Arabs affirmed that if we protracted our march one day, we should have no animals to carry us or our luggage to Bagdad. We were therefore compelled to push forward and brave the toils which momentarily

increased. In the evening we were informed that the next stage would terminate all hardships, no intelligence could have been more welcome and diffused greater joy. We all mounted at the appointed time; with longing eyes, every mound, hillock and undulation elicited the inquiry "is this Rubeiza? is this the village?" At mid-day the yearned-for spot, hidden in a dense wood of date trees burst open to our view; a simultaneous "Alhamdulallah," that rent the air above us, broke from every line. The most impatient restlessness seized men and beasts; the camels walked briskly, and seemed to scent the water; but a new adventure awaited us. Upwards of fifty Bedouins were seen loitering near the date plantation; disappointment lent new energy to our escort, and with a desperate impetuosity they rushed forward, sending staves, lances, and balls in the air. The hurried undaunted bravery of our escort, and a few sheiks, intimidated the Bedouins; and, amidst the loud shouts of the caravan, they decamped and hastened away. We alighted on a smiling green patch of grass, surrounded by sulphurous springs, whose clear transparent waters, notwithstanding, the obnoxious and unpleasant taste, were quite a luxury, after the fetid liquid we had been swallowing in the desert. The famished servants immediately procured dates and bread, which I shared with them, and furnished with these delicacies, I forgot all the troubles and fatigues I had endured.

Our servant, for he acted in that capacity to Mr. Sternschuss and myself, now thought that he had performed his task, and could divert himself a little; or, as the natives call it, make *keif*; and whilst we united together in grateful acknowledgments to that Providence who had so graciously protected us on our perilous and hazardous journey, he scampered off, and I did not see or hear anything of him till near sunset; when I found him in a little hut, in the midst of a large date-tree grove, surrounded by several Arabs, and their fair dames, who listened to him with breathless amazement, whilst he gave a *naïve* description of Europe, with all its wonders. He did not in his graphic account omit himself and his nation, (the Jews,) but dilated on the wealth and affluence

of his brethren, with such an air of hauteur, that it extorted from his audience the constant exclamation, "There is no power and no strength, except in God." As I did not wish to deprive this ragged collection of semi-savages of the benefit, pleasure, and edification of my servant's entertaining discourse, I walked quietly away to some other garden, where I was regaled with a good draught of fresh milk and half-baked thin black and heavy cake. Abdallah, Mr. Vicar's interpreter, who always scented where anything eatable was procurable, came to me and with wistful glance at the wooden milk bowl, enquired whether I had tasted any of the good milk of Kubeiza; and taking the primitive dish in his hand, placed it on his lip, and like a parched elephant, emptied it of its contents. His thirst allayed, he fetched a *nargilee*, and with this soothing companion laid himself under a tree, with all the pride and importance of a big man, or a Tchelibee. We were soon joined by some half-naked men, and completely denuded children; the women, who appeared most decent, were dressed in a coarse blue shirt, with a twisted rope round their waists. This exhibition of savage life would put in the shade the wild Esquimaux, the brutal Hottentot, or the untutored inhabitants of the Pacific Ocean. The last who came was a Mullah, a demure, filthy-looking personage, in whose countenance was legibly depicted every vice of his people. This exalted individual was received with a loud salaam, and from his lofty mien, I at once recognized that he combined the secular with the sacerdotal functions. When he was seated on his rural couch, he took out of his dirty pockets a handful of dates, and presented me with half and Abdallah with the rest. He then endeavoured to display his superiority, by asking various questions about *Franghestan*, and more particularly about the *Ingreese* (English), the only people known in his geography; but some of our auditory had already been so well informed on this subject by my servant, that I was spared the trouble of replying to this wise functionary's queries. Our religion now formed the principal topic of conversation, and the Mullah was not a little astonished when the interpreter told him that we did not believe in Mahomet or the Koran. "La illah ill Allah," (there is no god but God,) exclaimed he; "not believe in the Koran, the

Ingreese not believe in the Koran?" Abdallah gave him an epitome of our creed, "By Allah, your religion is good," added he. Poor simple people, they know nothing of their own religion, and consider every one in error who does not acknowledge their delusion. Is there no one in Christian Europe who yearns with anxious compassion for the welfare of the benighted Arabs! Is there no one whose bosom burns with zeal for their perishing souls! Shall the black tents of Arabia for ever remain excluded from the general sympathy of Christians, and will the unfading brilliancy of the immortal crown not animate some to sacrifice ease, life, wealth, and comfort in this noble achievement!

When I returned to the encampment it was already late, and the sentinels had increased their vigilance on account of the pilfering inclinations of the petty tribes near us, several ragged drivers, thinking me an inhabitant of the village, with clubbed sticks, like spirits summoned from the recesses of the earth, rushed upon me, and with one blow would have felled me, had I not possessed the presence of mind and thrown away my Arab abah, which in the blaze of a brushwood fire discovered to them their mistake.

They quite admired my bravery, and to make compensation for the fright to which I had been exposed, forced me to their bivouac, and persuaded me to take coffee with them. Abdal Kerim, and two or three other sheiks were also invited, but unfortunately the party was more numerous than the cups. This however did not distress the ingenious *carvaglee*, it only required a little more exertion of his salivary organs, with which he wetted part of his ragged shirt's sleeve, and cup after cup was rinsed and filled. I was still a novice, and ignorant of desert independence and primitive life, and consequently could not sip or swallow the whole dose, which the cup-bearer did not regret, as he emptied it himself to the very dregs. I now thought it time to join my own party, and stumbling over several bales, bags, and motionless bodies, reached the spot. Here all was dead silence; a few embers were glimmering in the rural kitchen, near which my servant, drowsy and grunting, sat smoking his pipe. I did not wish to disturb him in his

reverie, and have a bed made, but threw myself on the ground, bolstered the Abah under my head, and from dozing fell into a profound sleep. At dawn the servants began to arrange the luggage, and as their eyes were still dim with sleep, they threw a whole establishment of saucepans, plates, and cups over me. This heavy shower of culinary vessels, with the crumbs of the last repast in them, brought me to my legs, and instead of an apology or excuse, the cook, a Greek rogue, with imperturbable gravity, observed that he had watched the whole night to keep my dinner warm, as it was the best we had tasted for fifteen days; "And all this," added he with a sigh, "on account of a few dirty Arabs." I had now ample occupation till the caravan departed in washing the grease off my pantaloons. With bright daylight we set out again. The camel I rode, the driver assured me was the best, as the sheik had instructed him to mount his friend well; but to my great surprise the poor drudge would scarcely move, and was besides all over wounded, gory, and raw. I would gladly have dispensed with the sheik's favour, but it was in vain; the caravan was marching, the sound camels all overloaded, and proceed I must. There was one consolation, the stage was short, otherwise I should have been obliged to walk. We passed several large encampments, whose chequered appearance was pleasing to the eye, after the long monotonous desert journey. The road we traversed was covered with lava, and impregnated with salt.

We also passed several Naphtha springs, whose ammoniacal and sulphurous odour was anything but pleasant. These fountains are celebrated from time immemorial for their never-failing bitumen, quantities of which were formerly mixed with building materials, but since the destruction of the luxurious palaces and stately halls of Babylon, it is only employed in daubing boats and canoes. At eleven o'clock, A.M., we reached Hit, a small town on the banks of the Euphrates. We dismounted close to the river, whose refreshing stream infused new life into our parched frames. Whilst all were busy and active in preparing to cross the river, I enjoyed the luxury of a bath in the noble Euphrates, whose waters, as in days of yore, roll in mournful silence through the desolate region of this once mighty empire.

The pleasure of a change was most grateful to my feelings, and I evinced my delight by distributing most of my greasy garments among the women and children, who had watched my lavarian exercise with intense interest. In the afternoon we crossed the stream in a boat, composed of shapeless logs of wood, coated with gravel and bitumen.

\* We pitched our tents opposite Hit, and slept till dusk. During the night the transportations continued without intermission; and at dawn, when I quitted my little tent, which proved a most uncomfortable abode, as the sand-flies and musquitoes took unpardonable liberties with me, I found half the caravan had crossed, and the other half was preparing to do the same. At sunrise we breakfasted; our repast, which consisted of bread, milk and dates, would not have tempted an epicure, but it was a delicacy to us, who had for days only chewed a few hard, rancid biscuits. Every boat now brought a transport of women and children, who all hastened to see the harem of the Franghee. Every effort to keep them at a respectful distance, proved a useless and vain endeavour; and though Mrs. Vicars was dangerously ill, they crowded her tent and minutely examined her dress, and criticised her person. They were quite thunderstruck to hear that she had come a journey of four thousand miles, and were still more amazed to hear that the Franghee had only one wife. A few quite sympathized with Mrs. V's solitary position, and offered to be her companions, if the Franghee would buy them. Unfortunate, degraded beings, they know no happiness, and are ignorant of every moral, social and domestic tie; their minds are debased, their hearts uncultivated, their feelings blunted, and they think and converse without any reserve on topics the most nefarious, and subjects the most obscure. The interpreter gave them to understand that Christianity did not sanction polygamy, but they could not at all comprehend how a woman could find solace and comfort in the affections of her husband, without being surrounded by those of her own sex, who alone could share with her the burden of her imprisonment and captivity. As the sun had already gained several degrees of altitude, and continued to shed his burning rays on our canvass covering, we left the inquisitive assembly

in Mrs. Vicars' tent, and in company with half a score of denuded Arabs, crossed the muddy Euphrates, and by a causeway entered Hit, the ancient *Is*; which, according to Herodotus, furnished many of the materials for Nebuchadnezzar's famous capital. The town is a wretched collection of shapeless sheds and huts, and so offensively disgusting, that without contamination one could not traverse its streets and lanes. We hastened to the black hovel of a Jewish silversmith, who kindly conducted us to the house of Rabbi Isaac, the reader of the synagogue. The worthy teacher of this isolated and despised Karaite community\* received us with the greatest cordiality, and seemed quite delighted to see persons from distant Europe, who knew the sacred language, and whose creed, according to his idea, had so much of the purity of their own system of belief. After pipes and coffee, we proceeded to the synagogue, a sable dusky room, consisting simply of four smoked mud walls. The floor was covered with a tattered piece of carpet, and a small stool stood in one corner. I took my seat on the ground, and surrounded by the whole Jewish population, entered into a friendly discussion. They were evidently struck with the doctrines we preached, and did not evince the least hatred, violence, or opposition, against the blessed truths which we proclaimed. The Rabbi escorted us to the ferry, and several times enquired after the "*Ketab Saheer*," (meaning the New Testament,) which he was anxious to possess, yet too timid to ask for. In the afternoon, he and several other Jews returned our visit, and at the same time brought a present of bread, eggs, and dates; they remained upwards of two hours in my tent, and attentively listened to the passages of Scripture which I expounded. They acquiesced in all that was said, and dilated with delight on a subject so important and momentous. We sold them four Bibles, and five New Testaments, for which they willingly paid. They told me that their number had formerly been very considerable, but tyranny and oppression had extended their withering curse to all classes, and visibly diminished the popu-

\* The Karaites strictly adhere to the letter of the law, and reject all the Oral traditions of the rabbinical Jews.

lation of every hamlet, village and town. These few isolated and solitary Jews, hated by their bigoted, rabbinical brethren, and strangers to those sympathetic ties that sweeten the bitter waters which constantly mingle with the stream of life, can only find comfort and satisfaction among the tombs of their venerated sires, whose memory they respect and revere. They appear, however, happy and contented in the midst of their Ishmaelitish brethren, who suffer them, unmolested, to gain by the work of their hands a poor but honest subsistence. We protracted our stay at Hit several days, which time was profitably employed in continual intercourse with them. Our journey now no longer extended over the frightful desert; on the contrary, most of the plains were crowded with black horse-hair dwellings, and animated by herds of browsing cattle. We generally stopped by night near an extensive encampment, where we procured an abundant supply of meat, rice, milk, cheese, melons, and many other luxuries, for very little money. Our rest was, however, always short, as at two or three o'clock a noise in the camp announced the time of departure.

Three days before reaching Bagdad, a melancholy incident interrupted the hilarity and gaiety with which the approach to the city of the Caliphs had inspired every one. Death, that capricious and cruel tyrant, invaded our community, and, with his unfailing shaft, pierced one of the strongest men in the caravan. This grim intruder, wherever he makes his appearance, leaves always tragical traces of his afflicting visit; but there is something peculiarly affecting at the sight of a fellow creature expiring in the midst of a desolate and strange country, far from those whose soothing consolations, tender expressions, and affectionate solicitude, can smooth the dying pillow and assuage the agonies of the last hour. I stood near him when the silver cord of life separated itself from his tottering and throbbing frame, and never shall I forget the convulsions, contortions, and struggles of the poor Turk; with glazed and fixed eyes he stared wildly, and would fain groan, shriek, or speak, but the organs of speech refused their wonted service, and the rattling phlegm in his throat, indicated that all the schemes which instigated his passions and agitated his heart when he entered



upon his journey had reached their termination, and would no more fill him with hope or fear. Most of the Arabs crowded around him, and with all the cool indifference of fatalists watched the last glimmerings of the quivering taper; and then with united voice repeated for upwards of half an hour the creed, "There is no God except one." The plaintive voices of this wild chorus, in the darkness of night, and on the illimitable plain, had a most saddening and depressing influence. In the morning, the lifeless corse was tied in a basket, suspended on the side of a camel, and carried along like a useless lump of clay. It was an affecting sight to see a man who only a few days before was in full vigour and bouyancy, and in the meridian of life, swept in an instant from this busy scene, as if he had never existed. The docile camel even seemed conscious of its encumbering burden, and would scarcely proceed except when forcibly driven on, and then it rushed into the body of the caravan, and with its cold, stiffened load, jerk every one. Several times I had the misfortune to feel this sensation, and certainly it always made me shiver and tremble, and even now, in transcribing this incident, although I have since then seen death in all its shapes, still it fills me with terror, and sinks my heart within me.

On the 18th of October we came in sight of Bagdad. Never did my heart swell with greater gratitude to that kind Providence whose gracious protection had so visibly been extended to us, than when I saw the lofty minarets, towering date trees, and swelling roofs of the once far-famed capital of Islamism. We unloaded an hour's distance from the town, and soon the friends of the sheiks, the relations of the merchants, and others interested in the welfare of our caravan, came flocking towards the camp to embrace and salute those whose absence they had, no doubt, so long deplored. We were the only party whom no eager expectants hailed, no acquaintance anticipated, and no countenances welcomed us. We felt that we were solitary and alone—strangers, and in a strange country.

## CHAPTER II.

### BAGDAD.

BAGDAD, according to the Eastern writers, is styled "The mother of the world, the lady of cities, the paradise of the universe, the metropolis of peace, the tower of saints, the assemblage of the nobles, the mine of beauty, and the origin of learning and wisdom. The climate excellent, the water pure, the soil fertile, and the air balmy."

It was built by Almans-am, A.D. 760, on the western bank of the river Tigris: but whatever its grandeur and magnificence may have been in the times of the Abassides, its glory has departed, and its beauty disappeared, and the mind, stored with the fiction of Eastern romance, scarcheth in vain for the remains of those palaces and halls which once were the abodes of effeminate luxury and vicious indulgence. All the traces of its ancient fame and renown are mouldered into dust; but memory, unwilling to resign its fond and cherished feelings, anxiously, though unsuccessfully, glances in all directions to discover some building or ruin worthy of the capital of the prodigal Haroun-al-Rasheed. From the plain, the town, surrounded by a strong kiln-burnt brick wall, fortified by several bastions, gives an imposing appearance; but, like every Eastern city, the delusion vanishes as you approach. When I looked upon Bagdad from our encampment, and saw the extensive date-tree groves, intersected by ranges of houses and blue glazed tapering minarets, it had a grand and imposing aspect; but, as the poet says, "distance lends enchantment to the view;" for no sooner did I enter its narrow filthy streets, than the illusion vanished. In threading my way through its labyrinth of lanes and alleys, my eye met everywhere the disgusting and repugnant sight of naked, squalid children, and lazy, idle men; the former gambling and rolling in the dust of the

unpaved streets, and the latter indolently smoking or sleeping, under a thatched shed which constitutes the coffee shops. The external appearance of the houses is not calculated to convey any favourable idea of internal comfort; a brick wall, intersticed with two or three apertures, covered with lattice work to admit light, is the uniform aspect of the dwellings, both of rich and poor. Only a few houses have windows projecting over the path, where one generally sees four or five Turks lounging on easy cushions, and whiffing their chibouks; or, should the master be away from home, the caged inmates of his harem may be seen timidly favouring the busy street with a propitious glance of their gleaming dark eyes.

The Bazaars are the most attractive and fascinating spots in all Eastern towns, but particularly so in Bagdad, where one sees people of all shades and grades,—from the walls of China to the shores of the Mediterranean, the haughty Turk, sedate Arab, rapacious Bedouin, ferocious Kurd, cheerful Persian, unhappy Jew, demure Christian, grave Hindoo, and grinning African; and as all this mixed multitude howl and vociferate in the confused dialects of Babylon, the din and clamour is deafening. The shops correspond with the barbarous appearance of the ragged mob; two long continuous rows of booths, either covered with date-tree branches, or arched with brick and clay, to shelter from the fiery rays of the sun in summer, and the heavy showers in winter, constitute the scene of barter here, and in almost all the cities of Turkey and Persia. The booths are recesses in the wall, before which a platform of two feet is raised, to afford the vender of commodities a place to exhibit his merchandize; or, if customers do not importune him, to smoke, doze, or sleep. The mornings are the most energetic periods of the day; in summer, from seven to eleven, A.M., and in winter, from nine A.M. to two P.M., the bazaars are crowded with buyers and sellers, who occasionally, when in the very act of concluding the long discussed and disputed bargain, are separated by a file of camels, or a string of obstinate mules, who, indifferent to the interests of the parties whom they divide, walk on amidst the imprecations of the excited and virulent merchants, who wish

that they and their grandfathers\* had never been born. I frequently used to ramble through this confused scene of clashing interests and jarring competition, not animated with any feeling of interest or love of gain, but with the earnest and anxious solicitude to direct, if possible, some person or persons from the dazzling and delusive schemes of time, to the solemn realities of eternity; from the attractive tinsel of riches, to the incalculable and substantial treasures of heaven. Sometimes I squatted myself on a cushion, near a large turbaned Mussulman, and talked about the Koran, or wedged myself between four or five Jews, and conversed on the important truths revealed in the Bible; to me, the former would allow that lying was wrong, and the latter, that imposition was sinful, yet the one and the other practised the same in my presence with a perfect nonchalance, and requested me occasionally to confirm the falsehoods they asserted. The most sacred oaths and asseverations fall on the ear from every shop; the vender usually asks an exorbitant price for all his wares, and the purchaser, quite accustomed to this practice, seldom bids more than a third; at this the shopkeeper assumes either a frowning countenance, or breaks out in a most bitter strain of complaint against the government, people, and the whole world at large; this, however, does not in the least affect the stoical coolness of the customer. After many personal and most vituperative abuses, a trifle more is offered, at which the exasperated shopkeeper, in a great rage, tosses the goods in a corner, and soothes himself with his pipe. His neighbour, who has the same merchandize,† watches with the most intense anxiety, the concluding scene of the negotiation. Exhausted and wearied, the impatient customer tears the price-disputed article off the recess, swears by the beard of Abd-el-Kader,‡ and by the life

\* The Mahometans, in the ebullition of their passion, generally extend their imprecations to the parents and grandparents, and frequently to the seventh generation.

† Each trade and craft has its bazaar and proper name.

‡ Abd-el-Kader is a Mahometan saint, highly venerated on account of his exemplary piety, and the numerous miracles which are ascribed to him; he lived in Bagdad, and his remains are interred in the largest mosque, which bears his name.

of any one who may sit in the shop, that now he makes his final offer; the conflict then becomes serious, the one pretends he loses, the other affirms that he gains; at last, after combating and fighting for half an hour, the shopkeeper, for the sake of his *Jiddo* (grandfather), who was a pious Moslem, sells him the article, with the condition that he must not betray him to any one else, as he never before parted with goods at so low a price.

About three o'clock, P.M., most of the respectable merchants retire to their houses, coffee-shops, or beguile a few tedious hours in a shady, cool garden. On Friday, or *Yom-i-Jumah* (day of assembly), after mid-day, all business is suspended, the Mahomedan merchants go to their mosques or harems, and the Jews make their preparations for the Sabbath. On Saturday no business whatever is transacted; for the Jews, who have the monopoly of all the traffic and money, do not frequent the market. In passing through the bazaars, on the Jewish Sabbath, almost all the shops, with the exception of cooks, bakers, fruiterers, and green grocers, are closed; the greatest quiet reigns in these haunts of sordid passions, and, as by a magical touch, the pursuits of gain and the life-pulse of trade seem arrested.

Bagdad, in the meridian of its prosperity, and the zenith of its splendour, must, according to all accounts, have been worthy of that renown which tradition and history have assigned to it; but its glory is eclipsed, and its magnificence buried in the dust, and the mind in vain floats back to the period when golden trees, bending under their heavy loads of precious stores, adorned the gorgeous halls of the renowned Caliphs; the magnificent mosques, presided over by the most learned men of the East, and the sumptuous palaces filled with beauty and elegance, are all levelled and buried in the clotted soil; and nothing but heaps of rubbish, and mounds of shivered bricks and pottery, mark the traces of this celebrated city. The only vestige of its entombed glory is the college, or *medresseh*, of the Caliph, Mustanser Billah; it stands on the eastern bank of the river, and was built in the year 630 after the Hejirah; for a long period it was the seat of Oriental

learning and literature, pouring the light of science, art, and taste over the whole of Asia; its professors were the ornaments of the land, and its numberless students, nurtured within the classic walls of its sacred retreat, shed a bright halo and lustre around the diadem of its illustrious founder; it is now desecrated to the ignoble purpose of a barrack for a barbarous soldiery.

The most interesting and charming object is the Tigris; this beautiful stream, lined on the eastern margin with one uninterrupted succession of strong and substantial edifices, intersected by orchards and date groves, and on the western bank bordered with a dense forest of date and orange trees, mingled with a few shaded Arab huts, and enlivened by scores of boats, and the hum of hundreds of busy men and beasts, forms a varied and animated picture. In summer the stream is shallow, and the water clear and transparent; but in winter and spring, the rains and melting snows of Kurdistan generally change its colour, and swell it to such an enormous extent that it frequently overflows its banks and inundates the desert for many miles in circumference. In spring, 1849 and 1850, the whole country was overwhelmed with water, and the peasants and caravans could only reach the town in boats. During the summer months, wherever the water evaporated or became absorbed, a most powerful vegetation shrouded the desert in a green soft-matted carpet; but in the ditch round the wall, and other deep places, the standing waters turned into stagnant lakes, emitted a poisonous exhalation and deadly miasmata, which generated fever, ague, cholera, and every other disease, and converted the whole town into an hospital and sink of pestilence. The local government remained all this time recklessly indifferent, not a step was taken, not a plan adopted, to drain off the water; the prosperity and happiness of the people did not affect their flinty hearts, nor the sun of humanity warm their selfish breasts. The groaning agonies of the dying, and the piercing shrieks of the survivors, are equally unheeded; the houses may fall, the streets be depopulated, and the people waste, the Pasha is unmoved at the anguish and despair of the suffering multitude; he is con-

scious of the uncertainty of his position and the fallacy of his appointments, and bent only on amassing wealth, which in an hour of adversity may prove his safeguard and support, as also his ruin and misery.

In contemplating Bagdad, as it was in the days of the Abassides, when her streets were crowded by many hundred thousands of busy merchants and industrious artizans, her bazaars stored with the choicest products of Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and India; her thousands of mosques and mesjeds enriched with the munificent gifts and endowments of the benevolent and affluent, and her palaces shaded by the foliage of the vine and fig-tree, while the orange and lemon, and many thousands of tufting flowers, filled the air with their perfumes and balmy odours;—in comparing this past grandeur with the present withered and smitten aspect of the stronghold of Islamism, the mind expatiates almost with terror on the ruined glories and desolated paradisc of the Moslem world. The principal buildings within its shattered and broken walls, are—the mosques of Sheik Abd-el-Kader, Sheik Shehab-udeen, the Jamah-el-Vizir (on the banks of the Tigris), and the Jamah of the Maidau; and even these few, except the first, are out of repair: the other twenty-eight on the eastern, and ten on the western side of the river, are dilapidated and rotten, and will ere long tumble into ruin, or prove convenient gutters for all the offscouring and filth of the city. The *medressehs*, or colleges, also bear the impress and stamp of religious stagnation. There is not a single school where students receive a regular training; the whole system of education consists in reading the Koran by rote, and in storing the memory with a few of the sayings of the Prophets and Imams. Physic, geometry, astronomy, and mathematics, which formerly were cultivated with great care and diligence, are among the rising generation mystical names; even history, which has ever been a theme on which the Arab dilates with delight, as it records the exploits and conquests of the founders of the Saracenian Empire, is neglected, or the books are so scarce that the student is prevented from following the bent of his inclination. Some of the mosques, in former days, had large valuable

public libraries, which were always open to the studious ; but since the government has become the administrator of all ecclesiastical endowments and revenues, the income of many ecclesiastics has been considerably curtailed, and that of the rest sequestered for the use of the state. The professors and divines who were thus unsparingly deprived of their income and support, availed themselves of the libraries and other valuable gifts belonging to their mosques, and by these sacrilegious appropriations gained a penurious subsistence. Both in Turkey and Persia I had manuscripts frequently offered me, on which, in large characters, was written "Vokaf," or sacred.

Ignorance and superstition, thus encouraged by the ecclesiastics, must spread its demoralizing influence over all ranks and classes of society, and engender those criminal and flagitious crimes which at present are practised with impunity throughout the East. The domestic comfort and felicity of the people will easily be conjectured from their moral degradation ; besides this, polygamy, that most fatal, deplorable, and unjustifiable indulgence of the Arabian legislator, necessarily draws in its train many incalculable evils and unhappy consequences, and retards every mental and social progress. There is scarcely a respectable family in the East, where the baleful effect of this corrupt system does not exert its influence, and is not keenly felt. The noble, virtuous, and estimable qualities, which are the elevating ornament of the female character, are unknown wherever this barbarous custom is tolerated. In the harems of the great and noble, where four women, and often double and treble the number of female slaves are incarcerated, the most vile and dismal passions are cultivated, and grow luxuriantly. Every breast swells with hatred, and every heart is distracted with conflicting interests. The slave, as well as the mistress, is assiduous to engross the affection of the voluptuous keeper of this dismal receptacle of his indulgence ; and should any preference be shown to one, the hatred and animosity of all the rest will be rivetted upon her.

Most of the women of the East are devoid of all accom-



plishment, either of body or mind ; they possess no fascinating graces nor attractive charms ; they have neither delicacy of sentiment, nor elegance of expression ; vulgar, obstinate, violent, malicious, revengeful, selfish, incapable of love and tenderness, and destitute of all the beauty and gentleness which captivate the heart, and render them estimable and the ornament of society. Another evil is—most of the women are married long before they understand the importance and responsibility of the step ; and as the husband generally never sees his intended till the fatal die is cast, disappointed expectations, withered hopes, and delusive dreams, are his cruel lot, and he can only lull himself into contentment with the opiates which convenient Islamism, under such perplexing circumstances, affords its votaries ; five or six shillings procures a divorce, and the enslaved woman, a few weeks after the consummation of the marriage, becomes the prey of another tyrant, or, as many of the Persian females do, subsists on the miserable wages of iniquity.

If the woman belongs to an ancient family, or is connected with any noble house, the husband dare not proceed to extremities and rid himself of this courted encumbrance, but he endeavours to compensate himself by purchasing a white Circassian slave ; or should his bride be very indulgent and complaisant, he may unite himself to the daughter of a friend, a neighbour, or a lady of his own tribe. This liberty may, however, prove a chastising rod in the hand of his haughty mistress ; for should the new intruder possess any qualities by which affection is attracted, and love and attachment acquired, jealousy and resentment will fill the heart of the defeated rival, and vent itself in volleys of abuse, and sometimes in more sentient demonstration, on the submissive and patient husband.

Some Mahomedans of note and influence assured me that, whenever they bought a present for their women, they could not venture to present the gift to one in particular, for fear such an unintentional preference might kindle the fire of envy, and fill the house with rancorous strife and implacable malignity ; their usual mode was to throw the purchased articles

on the carpet, and let each help herself. Others are frequently compelled to engage separate houses for their respective wives, for fear the malevolence of the contending rivals should terminate in a tragical catastrophe. The unhappy offspring who are reared in these hothouses of malice and Jewdness, scandal and pollution, are from their infancy inured to all the impure, loathsome, and abandoned practices of their immoral parents. If the espousers and apologizers of Islamism had only a faint glimpse of its destructive and immoral tendency, I am certain that they would check their pens, and convert their unmerited panegyrics into severe satire and violent invectives.

The external, prison-like appearance <sup>of</sup> the houses, is an indubitable index of their interior gloom ; four or five rooms, scarcely ever visited by the cheering rays of the sun, with an open tower, or hall, facing the court, uniformly constitute the dwellings of the rich and opulent, and even these cannot claim any title to comfort or magnificence. The furniture invariably consists of a divan, carpet, and a few old bottles and cups, which are ostentatiously paraded in the recesses, with which every room abounds. The harems of the nobility and gentry are generally luxurious, having carpets, soft cushions, and rich quilts, in profusion. In the house of the Commander-in-Chief, in Shiraz, where I was privileged to dine, in his dormitory I counted upwards of seventy coverlets, and forty large cushions, which were all piled at the top of the room for ornament. The houses of the poor and labouring people are wretched and miserable in the extreme ; for they are neither calculated to shade from the scorching sun in summer, nor the inclement weather of winter ; but nature, as it were, has supplied this people with a frame which is able to brave heat and cold, and they live in their hovels enclosed in mud walls, and crowded with women, children, donkeys, and sheep, as merry and contented as if care and trouble were too delicate to enter these disgusting and filthy abodes.

The native topographers have most glaringly belied Bagdad, in saying that its climate is salubrious, and calculated to develop and enlarge the mind and understanding ; for whoever spends

a summer within its heated walls, will avow that, if it promotes anything, it is mental depression and physical lassitude. From May to October every exertion is a toil, and life an encumbering burthen. Most of the inhabitants pass their days in surdaubs, or subterraneous chambers, which are well adapted to exclude the sun, though I have frequently seen the thermometer range between 98 and 102 in these deep vaults. By night, all the inhabitants retire to the roofed terraces of their houses, to breathe the hot air of the desert, or to smoke their pipes and sip their coffee. Every terrace must have a parapet, to prevent the curious from gazing into his neighbour's unroofed bed-room. In the Christian quarter this precaution is not so strictly observed; in fact, they imagine the less decorous and the more bold they are, the greater their approximation to European life and manners. Many of their roofs have only palisadoes, and the privacy of these sleeping apartments is not the most attractive or pleasing sight. Some sleep on mats, others on carpets and mattresses, a few only on bedsteads. Sometimes, when Mr. Sternschuss and myself had been out to visit a friend or acquaintance, and returned home a little late, our fair neighbours, if they were not in the arms of Morpheus, without any hesitation would halloo out, and enquire where we had been, and how we had passed the evening, and many other familiar questions, without ever doubting the propriety of such affability and indelicacy.

Towards November the heat abates, and autumn, with its sickening blasts and sand storms approaches, and the serene, cloudless sky assumes a misty and scowling aspect. A few drops of rain, "like angels' visits, few and far between," occasionally descend, harbingers of glad tidings, announcing the approach of more copious and refreshing showers. At the end of December, the rain pours down in torrents, and the parched and gaping earth sucks in the delightful draughts, and the burnt and withered soil, within a fortnight after, is decked with a superabundant fertility, and covered in many places with the loveliest verdure. In February the sun with all his lustre pours his mild invigorating influences over the decaying trees, and infuses new life into the dismasted date and the leafless fig

trees. The air becomes balmy, and the most delightful fragrance is inhaled from the various groves which, with their dark foliage, crown the banks of the Tigris. The country, notwithstanding the richness of its soil, and the almost spontaneous produce which nature yields, is still very poor and rapidly declining in its importance. The extortions and oppressions to which the agriculturist is subject, and the dread in which he constantly lives, lest the bountiful reward of the labour of his hands should be seized, make him hesitate to touch the fields whose produce may prove his ruin; the consequence is, that the best lands lie barren and uncultivated, and the peasant, whose natural indolence inclines him to inactivity, looks at the waste ground with folded arms, without a sigh or a pang.

The withering and blighting influence of mis-government not only extends its baneful effects to the tillers of the land, but commercial interests are also retrograding under an arbitrary, oppressive, and tyrannical rule. The few articles which are manufactured in the town are too contemptible to merit notice. Arab cloaks, headcloths, and *Ezars*, or silk veils, in which the women wrap themselves when walking abroad, are the only things in which they excel; the number of looms employed for these purposes are daily diminishing. Wood, cotton, and silk, are in abundance; and under a just, wise, and equitable government, this place from its position between Syria, Persia, and Arabia, might be made an emporium of commerce, and an inexhaustible treasury, whilst at present the people are drained of their last farthing by the open violence of the Pashas, and the secret connivance of inferior extortioners, whose only object is to squeeze and despoil the people, without considering the injury their mal-government inflicts upon the country.

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## CHAPTER III.

### POPULATION OF BAGDAD.

MAN, like a plant, grows, thrives, and flourishes, under the genial influence of those methods which Infinite Wisdom has ordained for the development and perpetuation of the human species; but wherever debasing indulgence and imbecilitating vice predominate, the very juice of the vine becomes poison, and every blessing is turned into a curse. The corrupt doctrines of the Arabian legislator, and the vile passions which ooze out of his system, fully demonstrate this; and the most inveterate admirer of Mahomed, must admit that his Koran is very prejudicial to the spiritual and intellectual improvement of man, and the general welfare of society. A cursory glance at the population of Turkey and Persia are a tangible proof of this assertion. Where are the crowded cities, the happy multitudes, the smiling fields, and the busy scenes of commerce and manufacture? I might, did it not break the thread of my narrative, advert to Hira, Anbar, and Ctesiphon, or cities erected by the desert conquerors themselves, as Bussorah, Kufah, &c., but I will confine myself to Bagdad. This city in its palmy days contained a million of people, who, as the native historians state, were all either potent nobles or merchant princes; their houses were palaces, and their slaves the youth, bloom, and beauty of Europe and Asia; whilst at present it scarcely contains the eighteenth part of this vast population, within its desolate and debris covered area. According to the latest census, it counts within its wall, 40,000 Mahomedans, 1500 Christians, and 16,000 Jews. The latter, as a striking illustration of the decay of Moslem power, wealth, and industry, are the governing element of the place. They have their stored booths in every bazaar, occupy all the principal caravanseries with their merchandize, and entirely control the business of bankerage and monopolies. They are all strictly

rabbinical Jews, superstitious, bigoted, and intolerant; full of zeal for the Talmud and the traditions of the elders; scrupulous in the performance of all external rites of religion; ostentatious in their charity, piety, and devotion; tinctured with all the vices of their Mahomedan oppressors, and the errors of their pharisaical forefathers. They have three large and six small synagogues; the former are capable of holding 2000, the latter from 100 to 600 individuals. Their rabbies are proud, haughty, vain, and capricious men; neither distinguished for their abilities, nor admired for their wisdom. Cunning and presumption qualify them for exercising a despotic sway over their community. There are three who constitute the Jewish tribunal, and before whom all complaints are brought, and professedly, according to the merits of the case, are adjudged. These administrators of the law, however, are not always guided by the rules of honesty and integrity; intrigue, fraud and bribery keep the balance of justice, and woe to the individual who makes himself obnoxious to their rule. During the last few years, many of the Jews, weary and tired with the arbitrary proceedings and flagrant corruptions of their rulers, who for a bribe compound the greatest offence, contrary to the rabbinical inhibition, submitted their grievances rather to the ambiguous judgment of Mahomedan infidels, than Talmudical bigots. This irregular conduct excited the boisterous virulence of one, and pungent invectives of the other party, till at last the passionate recrimination vented itself in vindictive ebullitions of temper. Anathemas were fulminated against the insubordinate and unruly party, who retaliated, *verbatim*, with the same spiritual weapons. The affair was brought before the Pasha, who was no loser by the contest, for as both parties were solicitous to propitiate his favor, large and costly presents were lavished upon him in abundance. His Excellency, however, without investigating or examining the merits of the question at issue, like a true Eastern magistrate, according to the value of the donations poured in upon him, decided the combat, and the result was in favor of the rabbies. The Jewish tribunal was thus again restored in the amplitude of its power, and the most malignant charges and flagitious crimes were imputed to those who ventured to submit their claims to

the arbitration of a Mahomedan judge. This unholy crusade was carried on against all persons who disobeyed the rabbinical decrees, and since the Turkish authorities give credence to the most improbable and absurd evidence, without questioning the veracity of witnesses, whose long course of vice may have hardened them in infamy, so that they feel no remorse at the turpitude of perjury, many individuals were irretrievably ruined, and driven to wretchedness and want.

Besides this despotical hierarchy, there is a secular chief, Nasi, or Prince of the Captivity. This dignity, in the reign of the Caliphs, conferred both distinction and power; but, since the Mogul invasion, and the many unhappy vicissitudes to which the town, under different masters, has been subjected, it has become a mere title of courtesy, which, till within the last few years, was borne by the most ancient and esteemed family; but now it is indiscriminately given to the richest merchant, without any regard to his origin or character. The present Nasi was a common servant, in the employ of a Jew; he is a cunning, deceitful man, superstitiously bigoted, and most uncharitably intolerant; his principal business is to transact all government affairs of the Jewish community, and this places a tremendous power in his hands, which he often wields to the detriment of his people, and the aggrandizement of himself.

The sixteen thousand Jews of Bagdad, being more than a fourth part of the entire population, are divided into two classes, Persians and Arabians; and to the most careless observer, the cringing, slavish, and degraded appearance of the former, and the proud haughty mein of the latter, must offer a striking contrast. In learning, some of the Bagdad Jews greatly excel, though as a body they are ignorant, degraded, and immoral. The gloomy and pernicious tenets of rabbinism, which constitute the basis of their education, not only shroud them in the mist of prejudice and intolerance, but make them hate every improvement, and bind their intellects in the worst chains of mental bondage. Their teachers, who are only animated in their zeal by a despicable selfishness, carefully close every avenue through which light

and civilization might penetrate,—even the vernacular language of the country. A knowledge which would prove a great acquisition to the merchant and banker, is interdicted in their schools, so that among a hundred Jews often not one is found who can read or write Arabic, the majority know no more than how to repeat by rote the prayers of the synagogue, and with this they are satisfied and content. The whole system of raining the rising generation is most deplorable. There is not a single school where any useful knowledge is instilled into the tender minds of the young; they learn to write and read a little Hebrew, just sufficient to join mechanically in their public prayers, and to keep, at some future day, an account of their debit and credit; any instruction that might develop the mind, refine the heart, and elevate the soul, would be considered blasphemy and impiety, and be severely reprimanded by the Jewish authorities. The system of teaching, and the plans of education, if they promote anything, it is vice and wickedness. The very appearance of the establishments for the diffusion and perpetuation of rabbinic Judaism, impress me with the mournful fact that lust and passion are fostered with greater solicitude within their sullen walls, than those sublime truths which infuse the love of God, and teach the young souls those lessons of wisdom which would enable them to bear the rude shocks and hot trials of this boisterous ocean of our existence. The first time I visited the principal school, which is connected with the large synagogues, my mind quite recoiled from the sight I witnessed. Upwards of five hundred children were squatted together in a dark gloomy room; some were sleeping, others speaking, and a few with loud voices, according to their own impulse, repeating scraps of their lessons, without any decency, reverence, or decorum. The schoolmaster himself, a demure-looking man, whose neglected dress and uncouth appearance plainly bespoke his unfitness for the moral raining of others, was wedged in between ten or twelve youths, whom, amidst curses and imprecations, which with great rapidity flew from his lips, he was instructing in the obscene and nefarious book called Nidah. I requested him to show me the book, and pointing to the passage he was expatiating



upon, I said, "O Chacham, do you suppose that such precepts as you inculcate into the sensitive minds of your pupils, will promote their spiritual progress, and steel their hearts against the soul-polluting corruptions which these poisonous pages must impress on their thoughts and feelings?"

He looked at me with perfect amazement, and then said, "They are all going to be married in a short time."

"How old are they?"

"Between fourteen and fifteen."

"Do you imagine that by acquainting them with the most contaminating and demoralizing evils, you furnish them with an antidote against their future development?"

"No; but since they are all the sons of learned and rich men, it is necessary, before they enter into the conjugal state, that they should have read the book of Nidah."

"I tell you what they ought to know, the Word of God. This will teach them the grand object for which life was given, make them good husbands and affectionate fathers, and industrious and useful members of society."

The Chacham doubted my assertions, and the book of Nidah, which taints the character of the Jewish youths with hues of the darkest dye, continues to be preferred to the instructions of infinite wisdom. Thus, wherever rabbinism reigns with undisputed sway, immorality is carefully fostered, and sin and iniquity do luxuriantly grow.

It may easily be imagined with what contempt these people looked upon missionaries, whose avowed and determined object was to guide and lead them into the way of truth and life. Excluded from all intercourse with Europeans, and confined within their sun-burnt desert, they look upon themselves with approving complacency and childish vanity; in fact, they congratulate themselves upon their superiority over their neighbours, and think that they are entitled to veneration and esteem, on account of their intellectual dignity and uncommon virtues. The Pharisaical pride which animated their haughty forefathers, has still its germ in the breasts of their self-righteous descendants; the pompous ostentation of piety, and rigorous punctilious adherence to the traditions

of the elders, they consider as meritorious as he who with an audacious bold front exclaimed, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." Their knowledge is scanty, and their views narrow and confined; they have no idea of anything beyond their own sphere of vision, and consequently feel no anxiety to burst the rusty fetters of darkness, dullness, and ignorance, which for so many centuries have kept their minds in iron bondage and mental slavery. Like their Mahomedan neighbours and masters, they are full of prejudice, intolerance, and superstition; they pride themselves on their origin, and delude their minds with dreams of future triumph and glory; their past history, though one successive tale of painful vicissitudes, has not damped their hope, nor cooled their ardent expectations. They are despised, reviled, buffeted, scorned, and plundered; but they have a sustaining confidence in the promises of their prophets, and look at their dispersion as an evidence of their future restoration. Like their haughty ancestors, they scorn and reject the true Messiah, and with an intense gaze they turn to Zion, and with yearning impatience expect the advent of a temporal prince, who will subdue their enemies, revenge their sufferings, build up the temple of their captive seer, and restore the departed glory of their nation, in that land whose history is engraven on the heart of Jew and Gentile, and which has been consecrated to the peculiar abode of the Shechina, and is emphatically styled "the City of God." This people, who in their desert plains had thus for centuries indulged in the vain delightful dreams of future conquests, achievements, and uninterrupted happiness, had never heard or read anything about our holy religion; and their amazement was, therefore, greatly heightened when they saw three followers of the despised and rejected Nazarene in their place of exile, with the avowed purpose of teaching them a religion which they had hitherto regarded as a system of gross idolatry and palpable errors. Curiosity, however, led many to our house; the rabbies themselves, attracted by the novelty, thronged our courts and rooms; the judicious discourses and pious exhortations aroused some, and shook the settled belief of others,

and a feeble light was gradually rising, which threatened to disperse the impenetrable darkness that had enshrouded the plain of Shinar; a few came for instruction, and others to attend the daily Hebrew services. The rabbies now discovered their mistaken liberality in allowing their people to have free intercourse with Christians, whose doctrines were not founded on some self-spun cobwebs, or on a speculative fanciful belief, but on the eternal truths spoken by Moses and the prophets. They now waited with anxious solicitude for a favourable opportunity to pour their full-charged cup of enmity and hatred upon us and our efforts; and this longed-for moment at last arrived: two Jews, one of them related to a high rabbi, and a very intelligent man; the other, like most of the Jews here, ignorant, but sincere and candid, declared their conviction of the truth of the Christian verity, and expressed great eagerness for instruction; their wives and friends, and the Chachamim, endeavoured to dissuade them from their purpose, and as all efforts to shake their firmness and adherence to the truth failed, bastinado and imprisonment on false and flimsy pretexts were submitted to their option, and the struggle and conflict in their hearts was, indeed, hard before they decided. The rabbies themselves were amazed at their constancy, and openly declared that wicked spirits abetted our cause, and infatuated those who came in contact with us. They were now determined to arrest the progress of the Gospel, both by open violence and secret cunning. Every avenue leading to our house was closely watched, and every street guarded by vigilant spies; menaces and threats were used to intimidate the weak and poor, and excommunications to frighten and terrify the rich and potent. Our trials were great, and our discouragements many; but faith, the sovereign remedy and solace for all the calamities that cast a cloud and throw a dark shadow around our existence, supported and sustained us in our troubles, and urged us to prosecute our work with greater energy and redoubled vigour.

The Chachamim and their abettors were, however, not inactive. Both in the synagogue and public market, they declaimed against us and deprecated our efforts; and, as the Jews in this

part of the world are not so very sensitive, they had recourse to the most vile and iniquitous threats in order to intimidate and deter any one from coming to us ; the dread of punishment, and the outrageous clamour of the leaders and teachers, produced the desired effect ; though, at the same time, the exhibition of principles so opposed to the better feelings of our nature, opened the eyes of some, and filled them with disgust and abhorrence for the tenets of rabbinism. The pugnacious rabbies no longer restrained in their animosity to Christ and to the Gospel, gave uncontrolled scope to their rancour and resentment, and on March 27th, 1845, the suspended sentence of a terrible excommunication, attended with the blowing of a horn and the unrolling of the books of the law, was finally fulminated against us, and any one ~~who should~~ hold intercourse with us ; in fact, their anxiety to obstruct all communication with us induced them to interdict even the outskirts of their quarter, where the Jews generally resorted on Saturday, to waste in idle gossip and drunkenness the heavy hours of the Sabbath, and which frequently proved a convenient place for preaching and distributing tracts.

On the same day that the interdict was published, a Jew called, and invited us to his wedding. We felt some hesitation in yielding to his solicitous request, as we apprehended that our presence might impose some restraint on the hilarity of the hymeneal party ; but as the host assured us that all his Bagdad guests would not afford him so much pleasure as ourselves, we then accepted his polite invitation. Some time after sunset, the bridegroom dispatched a messenger, to inform us that " all things were ready, and that we should come to the marriage." (Matt. xxii. 4.) On arriving at the house, our guide conducted us through a low and obscure passage, into a large square court, filled with drunken men and noisy children, whose grotesque and variegated costumes, gave the festive house a wild and singular aspect. We were ushered into a spacious open hall, surrounded on all sides with divans and cushions, on which the rich and potent complacently drank their wine, smoked their pipes, or listened to the discordant noises which the rude instruments of a few ragged musicians produced.

The uppermost places at the feast were, of course, occupied by the *grande*es and rabbies, and, as a peculiar honour, we had places assigned among these distinguished personages; a privilege to which we did not aspire, and I am certain many of the rabbies did not think us entitled to, or worthy of. This farce of etiquette among Asiatics of all denominations, is a frequent cause of jealousy, and the host is sometimes wearied and perplexed in his mind in making the arrangements about precedence, so as not to give offence to any one of his guests. The rabbies are most fastidious in matters which affect their pride and vanity, and, with the greatest arrogance and presumption, they will, on every public occasion, monopolize the chief places: like their proud, insolent, and self-righteous forefathers, they love "the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues." Our reception by the *elite*, and every one else, was quite gratifying; the most flattering compliments were lavished upon us in profusion, and all pretended to cherish feelings of the highest regard and esteem for our persons. But as these impertinent and unmeaning flatteries copiously flow from the lips of every Oriental, we knew their import, and consequently retained a taciturnity, which convinced our hospitable entertainers that we were unaccustomed to reply to such vain and heartless falsehoods. The party in the hall and court, must have exceeded two hundred persons, besides a large number of women who occupied a separate part of the house, (men and women here never associate together,) and by their yells and monotonous shrieks, occasionally reminded their gay and jovial consorts that they also copiously participated in the joys of the bridal board.

This numerous nuptial party amused and diverted themselves by smoking caleroons, eating sweetmeats and drinking copious draughts of arrack, an ardent, inebriating beverage. Many were completely intoxicated, and their gambols and antics might have done credit to the most desperate band of bacchanalians, that ever consummated their orgies in the purlieus of a most noted London gin-palace. People in the East have no idea of moderation in eating and drinking, and they would rather suffer the greatest physical inconvenience, than impose any restraint on

their detestable propensities. The only individuals in this large assembly who did not degrade themselves by copious libations from the "fire-water" cup, were the Chachamim and a few of the grandees; the rest were all in physical disorder and mental giddiness. This kind of feasting, which generally continues ~~seven~~ seven days, is always connected with the happy ceremony which links the fortunes of two beings together. The rich as well as the poor cheerfully conform with the custom; the latter willingly spend their last mite in order to provide abundantly for this joyous occasion. One would almost imagine that parties who enter into this felicitous state under such auspices, must dream of nothing else but bliss and delight; but their elysian existence is in many instances of short duration. The festivities which presaged so much visionary bliss to the new married pair, are often followed by grievous disappointment; the husband who, before his marriage, had little if any *tête-à-tête* conversation with his fair partner, finds her unequal to his wishes; and withered expectations, disputes, disgust, and hatred, which supplant every spark of affection, follow rapidly in the train, and within the circuit of twelve months, both have experienced the sweets of marriage and the bitters of divorce.

The courtesousness of the Jews and the hospitality of our host, were most flattering; all delicacies were placed before us, and on all sides (as if our digestive organs were of steel) we were importuned to partake of the luxuries of the feast. At half-past nine o'clock, formidable long planks and logs of wood were brought into the hall, to provide tables for dinner. The boards were placed horizontally on the logs, and in the course of five minutes the whole place was covered with tables sufficient to accommodate the majority of the guests. Cloths, knives and forks, were articles unknown in Paradise, and Asiatics, therefore, out of esteem and regard for the customs of their venerated sires, do not wish to supersede them. The smoke of the pipes, the smell of arrack, and the howlings of the musicians, had already given me a terrible headache, and as the steaming viands were not calculated to relieve it, we made a humble apology, and, with the gracious *salaams* of all, quitted the jovial assembly.

## CHAPTER IV.

### VISIT TO ANCIENT BABYLON.

I FREQUENTLY intended to visit the interesting and remarkable site of ancient Babylon, but a multiplicity of engagements always deprived me of this longed-for trip. The anathema, and the violent proceedings of the Rabbies, at last afforded me leisure; and, accompanied by Mr. Sternschuss, my fellow labourer, and an Italian Jew, I set out for the celebrated city of the Chaldean kings. The morning was beautiful, and the desert, under the influence of reviving spring, presented a faint emblem of what the country once was, and what it may again be when the paralyzing religion of the pseudo-prophet will be swept away, and the Gospel, with its civilizing power, unfold the treasures which he hid in the lap of this futile and unproductive region. At the outskirts of the city, and under the shade of the mausoleum of Zobeida, the tenderly-beloved mistress of Haraunal-Rasheed, we took our breakfast. According to the native topographers, this sepulchral monument stands in the centre of ancient Bagdad, and on a spot which this magnanimous and liberal queen made the envy and praise of the world. But all the magnificence of the Abbassides is crumbled into dust; their luxurious gardens have become parched wastes, their gorgeous palaces ruins, and their halls, hung with silk-embroidered tapestry, and fanned by golden trees, the abode of the lion, hyena and jackall. The venerated tomb is all that remains, on the western bank of the river, of the splendid imperial seat, and even this is rapidly hastening to decay. The natives, from motives of respect mingled with superstition, have chosen the vicinity of the royal sepulchre as a cemetery of true believers; and for ages successive generations have found a final resting place amidst the subverted domains of the vicars of the Prophet. On Fridays, when the living pay their devotions at the shrines of their deceased friends and relatives, the scene presents an



TOMB OF SID ZOBEDA.





animated and lively aspect, but during the rest of the week, the Arab with his camel, or the shepherd with his sheep, are the only beings who frequent this city of the dead, this wreck of human grandeur.

From this dreary patrimony of the heirs of corruption, we rode southward, over the plain of Babylon,\* once crowded with cities and human habitations, whose traces still exist in the shapeless mounds, bricks, pottery, and other vestiges, which cover the ground in all directions. We halted over night at the khan, appropriately called "Bir-unusef,"—the well half-way,—it being equi-distant from the modern to the ancient Babylonia. Before dawn next morning we were again mounted; the air was quite cold and piercing, and the sharp winds made us shiver and shake in our thin summer dresses. At sunrise we felt comfortable, but no sooner did this bright luminary ascend towards the meridian than the heat was insupportable; my face was inflamed and burned, and we were glad to shelter ourselves for a few hours from the scorching rays, under the black roof of a khan, crowded with pilgrims on their way to Kerbelai. Towards *asser*† we came in sight of Babylon, "the city of kingdoms! the beauty of the Chaldean's excellency!" It would be difficult to describe our sensations in beholding this renowned ruined city. I anticipated to see great desolation and perfect destruction; but for such an utter annihilation and gloomy solitude, I was quite unprepared. Unconsciously, I took my Bible out of my pocket, and read Isaiah xiii., xiv. "Surely," did I mentally exclaim, "this is Scripture emblazoned in legible characters, and prophecy vindicated by the most evident verification." We did not stop to examine the huge piles, which extended to the very verge of the horizon, but in solemn silence rode with our jaded animals over the soil which once was trod by the lords and nobles of a sumptuous and luxurious court. The path, till near Hillah, was covered with pottery, broken bricks, bitumen, and other remains of former dwellings. The

\* The Jews in the East, both in writing and speaking, always style Bagdad—Babylon.

† Between noon and nightfall; the period when every pious Mahomedan performs the third prayer of the day.

governor, to whom we had letters of introduction, was not in town; but we applied to his deputy, and he promptly attended to our wants, and ordered a house to be evacuated for us. Unfortunately, the place he recommended was like an Augean stable, which we had neither patience nor charity enough to clean. We sent again to His Excellency, and informed him of our position. He assured us, through the *Cumass*, that it was a mistake, and directed us to another place. Here a new obstacle arose: the people of the house were pious Shee's, who looked upon us, and upon Christians in general, with supreme contempt. The *Cumass* acquainted them with his superior's request, but they positively declared that their abode was not to be defiled by a *gaour*. After a great deal of debate and parleying, we got a little room in the Divan Khane. Our troubles were, however, not yet at an end; our host, a holy Hedjee, had a few scores of guests under his roof, who, during the greater part of the night, amused themselves by bellowing at the top of their voices, "There is no Deity but God; and Mahomed is the Apostle of God!" These senseless performances are, according to the false prophet's teaching, meritorious in the sight of God; and the greater the abstraction from all objects of sense, the more acceptable the service, and the better the reward. I certainly never liked anything in Islamism, but this stupid exhibition quite disgusted me with its doctrine and preaching.

Our restless and uncomfortable night was followed by a noisy and confused morning; at four o'clock the women began to milk the buffaloes and sheep, and as some of these domestic animals had been attracted by the more congenial atmosphere of our dormitory, *sans* force or ceremony, the fair dames of the house, without taking them into the court, went through all their operations; and, as if we were pieces of rock, devoid of all sensibility, commenced lighting fires of green reeds to boil the white fluid. This exceeded our patience and forbearance; I roused our snoring servants and muleteers, and in a second the fire was extinguished, though we had abundance of smoke instead of it, and the milk-maids, shrieking, driven into the court. At sunrise we went, provided with a good number of





tracts, to visit the Jews; the synagogue service was already ended when we came, and we were requested to adjourn to the school, where the majority soon collected. They were not averse to hear, but exceedingly reluctant to discuss, any of the questions we broached. We showed them the New Testament; they glanced over a few pages, and remarked that Christianity was founded on prophecies which were enveloped in obscurity, and beyond our capacities to comprehend. We pointed them to the ruins by which their habitations were surrounded, and asked them whether their allegation needed any farther refutation. They acknowledged the justice of our observation, and a few, with delight, accepted copies of the Gospel. At noon, accompanied by a servant and several Jews, I took a walk over the shattered and fallen remains of abased Babylon. I had perused several ancient and modern travellers, and from these often conflicting and jarring accounts, expected to see some stupendous and magnificent buildings, whose elegance, though buried in the dust, would still, like Palmyra and Persepolis, retain sufficient to strike with wonder and admiration every visitor; but the dream of my fancy dissolved so soon as I had ascended the first pile, which rose dark and frowning from the blasted plain. In perfect bewilderment I strained my eyes in all directions, over an endless succession of fantastically-shaped hills and tumuli, like the waves of a stormy sea, without meeting with any object that might relieve the sight, or alleviate the gloom which imperceptibly crept over me.

A few spectral mounds, like the giant ghosts of this smitten realm, towered above the rest and enhanced the melancholy of this rueful spot. I was indeed trembling when I took my Bible and read aloud the fearful threatenings of the Prophets over the guilty city; it was in vain to ask where are the glittering gates through whose portals flowed the mighty stream of luxurious nobles and proud merchants? Where the stately palaces, through whose re-echoing halls music poured her sublimest strains, and dissipation and gaiety perpetually dwelt? Where the hanging gardens, which even Grecian writers, who had been nursed in the lap of art and science, considered one of the wonders of the world; the impregnable walls; the

hundred brazen gates ; and thousands of other beauties and splendours of an admiring world ? The besom of destruction has entirely swept away the gorgeous and luxurious city. Here the sceptic must not question, and the infidel dare not scorn and ridicule the Divine source of prophetic revelation. When I had recovered from the doleful impression which the sight of this sublimely terrible confusion made on my mind, I clambered over the rugged surface of the shattered mass on which I was standing. The extent, shape, and vastness of its dimensions at once confirmed the conjecture that it was a place of considerable import and of corresponding strength, and gave great plausibility to the supposition which identifies it with the citadel, " the fortified palace," of the Babylonian rulers. The natives call it Mujellibe, from the Arabic, Mukaloub (overturned), an appellation which conveys only an indistinct and faint idea of the utter demolition and subversion of this quadrangular heap. In several places beneath this ruin are deep cavities and apertures ; these may probably have been rooms, which in the general destruction were wrenched from their base, but were preserved by their substantial building material from being utterly crushed under the superincumbent weight. I intended to creep into one of these mysterious caverns, but my companions entreated me not to attempt such a thing, since every hole abounded with venomous snakes and other dangerous reptiles. " Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and a hissing." (Jer. li. 37.) About a mile from the Mujellibe, over a tract intersected by broken-up canals and pools of stagnant water, is the Kasr, another prodigious monument of departed grandeur and majesty ; it is also styled Babel, and the desolation and destruction which distinguish this former abode of royalty are so complete, that no pencil could delineate it, and no words describe it more accurately than those used by the inspired penman. The earth from beneath, and the heavens from above, seem to have united in effecting the last overthrow of the colossal fabrics which here reared their huge domes towards the cloudless sky. In fact it is quite impossible, with the scantiest acquaintance of the history of these localities, to scale hill after hill, and mound after mound,



*1. Purday 24. Mduox 3<sup>rd</sup> Regent 3<sup>rd</sup>*

M U J E L L I B E .

*Dean & Clayton 11th*





all formed of broken burnt bricks, glazed tiles, and other building materials, without exclaiming, "this is the work of the Lord, in the land of the Chaldeans."

Whilst I was inspecting these gigantic remains, I saw several peasants, with spades, busily collecting out of the dust and rubbish the sound bricks, and conveying them on the backs of donkeys to the bank of the river, where a boat was waiting to transport them to another district. This process has been going on for ages, and still the piles though they change their external aspect, do not appear to diminish much in their actual size. The quarry seems inexhaustible, and for years to come, the palace of Nebuchadnezzar may supply dwellings for the wild and barbarous inhabitants of Chaldea. Some disjointed and unhinged walls still stand in striking beauty, amidst the fallen and crumbled masses; their appearance is quite new and fresh; some of the bricks are so firmly cemented that no ingenuity can detach or extract a complete piece. Close to these curious vestiges were no doubt the hanging gardens and aerial groves, the boast of Babylon, and the triumph of human labour and skill. No traces, however, now exist of this terrestrial paradise, all is withered, decayed, and brought down to the grave. One solitary tree, as if in derision of the scene which it recalls, stands mournfully in the midst of these buried glories. The natives, who are fond of the marvellous, relate that God preserved it from destruction in order that Ali, the great Imam, might repose under its shade after the fierce battle of Hillah; if this story is true, the tree must have existed about twelve hundred years ago, and may then have derived its root from the graceful plantations which boundless extravagance had suspended in the air.

From the Kasr, I proceeded a little south, to the adjacent mounds called *el Amran*, the distance is only a few hundred yards, but the rains had so soaked the soft soil, that at every step I sunk knee-deep in the loose mould. These ruins, which bear the name of a Mahomedan saint, occupy an area far greater than any other on the eastern bank of the river; I scaled the loftiest pile, and in gazing below and around, the question hung on my lips, "Is this utterly untenanted deso-

lation, the golden city of Nebuchadnezzar ; the metropolis of the world?" Once indeed she was the queen of cities, the residence of mighty kings, her palaces, streets, temples, and gardens were the admiration of the world, and the boast of her rulers ; but in vain are all the works which the hands of man can rear against Him, who "looketh on the earth, and it trembleth : he toucheth the hills, and they smoke." (Ps. civ. 32.) With one fatal stroke, the works of successive generations are levelled with the trodden soil, and swept from the surface of the earth. The invincible conqueror of the East, may in the pride and exaltation of his heart exclaim, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. iv. 30) ; but above the din of the busy multitude, a small still voice is heard ; "It shall be brought down, laid low and brought to the ground, even to the dust ;" the roving Arab shall disdain to pitch his tent there, or shelter his flocks within the dismal waste.

"The Shepherd eyes afar

Her evil towers, and devious drives his flock."

When I had wearied my eyes with the bewildering sight of these monuments of Divine vengeance, accompanied by my companions, I threaded my path between artificial hills and ravines, down to the bank of the Euphrates, whose noiseless waters were still flowing along, as in days of yore, unconscious of the havoc and desolation of the empire it once fructified and enriched. We crossed several dried-up canals, where most likely the willows grew, on whose drooping branches the captive daughters of Judah hung their silent harps, and refused to sing whilst Zion was in bondage :—

"On the willow, that harp is suspended,

Oh Salem ! its sound should be free ;

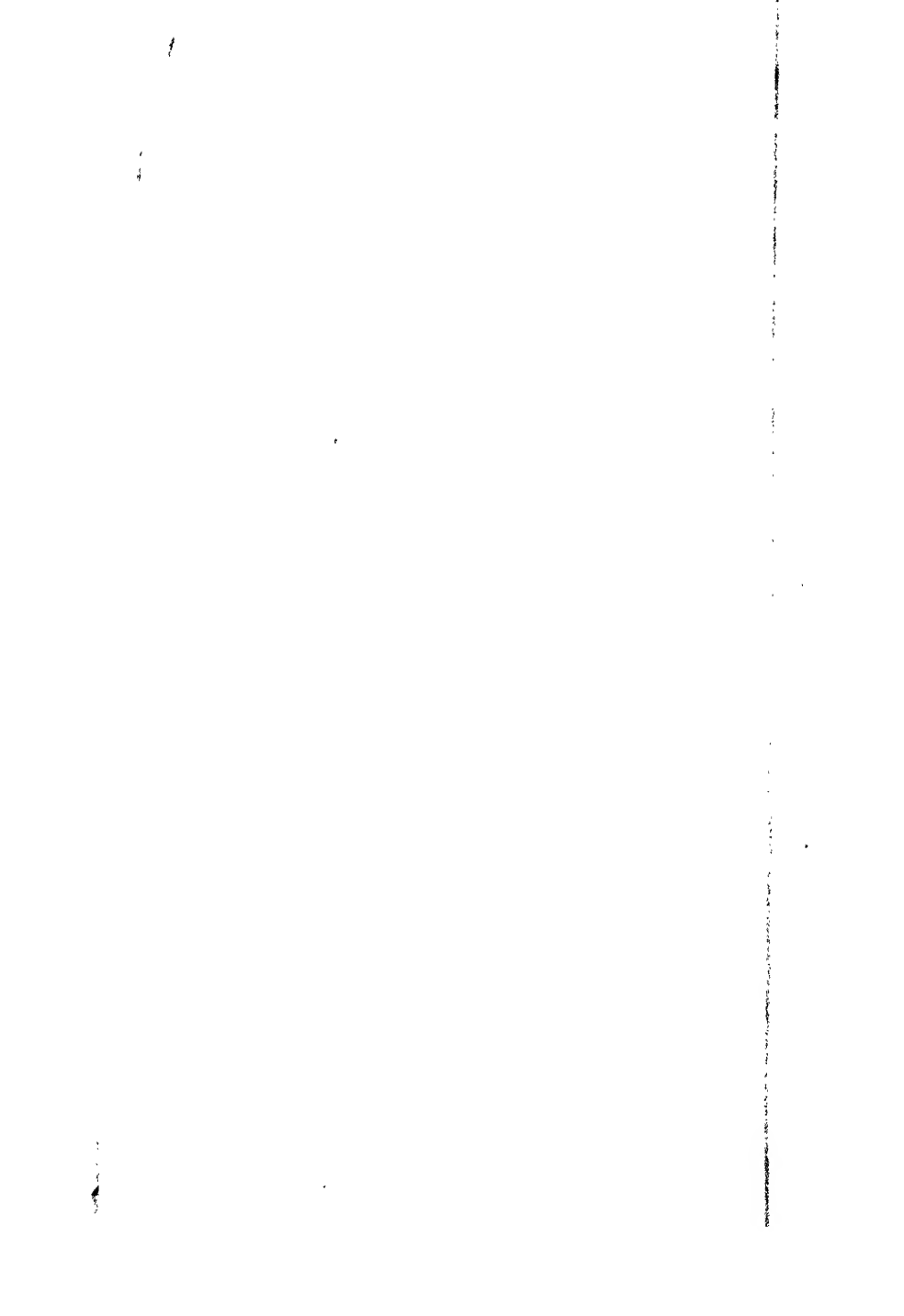
And the hour when thy glories were ended

But left me that token of thee ;

And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended

With the voice of the spoiler by me !"

While I was ruminating on the strange vicissitudes of this proud city, which, like an everlasting rock, seemed destined





to reach the utmost verge of the world's existence; three swarthy, suspicious-looking Arabs, as if they had emerged out of the bowels of the earth, stood before me. I was at first surprised at this sudden apparition; but recollecting that my party were strangers, I resumed the bold air of undaunted fear. They were, however, notwithstanding their uncouth and rough external, harmless beings, who had hunted some wild boars, which infest the gardens and fields along the river; and frequently deprive the peasant of the reward of his toil; they inquired where we had been, and when I told them that we had visited Babel, they stared at each other with an incredulous look, as much as to say, We know better, you Franghees search among these wasted temples and palaces for talismans and treasures. They were particularly anxious to inspect the contents of a carpet-bag, which I carried in my hands, as they were quite certain it concealed something valuable. I complied with their request, and what wry faces did they cut, when, instead of gold and silver, they beheld worthless relics, in the shape of mortar, shells, pottery, glass, and fragments of bricks, with cuneiform inscriptions. They offered, for a small remuneration, to supply me the next day with whole loads; I thanked them for this courtesy, but promised them a present, if they found me some coins. One of them was quite willing to go to the Kasr, and search among the debris on the mounds, but his friends would not allow him; alleging, as an excuse, that it was near night, and both the Mujellibe Kasr, and Amran, dangerous localities at such hours. "Babylon shall never be inhabited,—but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." (Is. xiii. 21.) My Jewish friend subsequently furnished me with a good many ancient coins, and other mementos from the ruins of the proud daughter of the East; and lately, through the kindness of a gentleman connected with a scientific commission, sent out by the French government, I obtained complete specimens of the bricks, used in the construction of the city, and for the gratification of the reader, I have here carefully transcribed the cuneiform writings stamped on the same. (See Engraving.)

Our object in going to Hillah being partially accomplished, we made arrangements for visiting the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel, which tradition has placed in this vicinity. The governor, unsolicited, furnished us with an escort; as the country was reported to be unsafe, and several Jewish pilgrims had been plundered the day before. Our ride over the plain was exceedingly unpleasant, as we were alternately in danger of being blinded by the glare reflected from the nitrous efflorescence which encrusts the soil of Babylon, and condemns it to perpetual sterility; or suffocated by the pulverized dust, which our horses' hoofs, in circling clouds, raised as we rode along. At noon we reached "*Kiffel el Yehud*," the place where the remains of the captive seer are interred. The Arabs who live near provided us with a lodging, but unfortunately the swarms of insects and vermin drove us, after a vain effort to resist their assaults, into the open air. Early in the morning we hastened to the mausoleum, the door was still firmly closed, and we had to exhaust our lungs before the decrepid porter made his appearance. Without any questions, he admitted us within the sacred edifice. Many scores of Jews were still in promiscuous indecency under their quilts; and a few, as we moved with our heavy boots over the stone pavement, peeped at us with an angry frown, and then turned round again and slept. The *sanctum sanctorum*, which contains the supposed manes of the Prophet, is a neat vaulted room, forty feet long and eighteen broad. The sarcophagus is of plain wood, covered with a gaudy chintz pall, which is annually renewed by the richest Jew, who pays an exorbitant sum to the synagogue for this privilege, and meritorious action. There are four other revered shrines in an adjacent vault, which have, however, no epitaph or name; the Jews assert that they were distinguished individuals, whose titles and history have been lost in the stream of time, and as tradition is the great criterion in the East, we passed in devout silence by the tombs of these unknown Hebrews. The rest of the day we spent in the company of the pilgrims, who, unlike the Mahomedan Hodjees, were devoid of all pride and arrogance, and gladly discussed with us the important and momentous truths of the Bible. In



*Dean & Gayser, litho*

## HILLAH ON THE EUPHRATES.

*Y Purday 24, Maddox & Regent St*





the evening we engaged a boat and crossed the Baher el Nedguff, an immense lake, which has been caused by the bursting of the embankments which confined the waters of the Euphrates, and the destruction of the ancient Pallacopas. Our voyage occupied the greater part of the night. At daylight we reached Kufah, and immediately left our fragile bark, and took a stroll over the ruins of this once celebrated city. The artificial mounds and piles which constitute its relics, participate in the uniformity which characterizes the remains of all other places of antiquity on this plain. After a breakfast of bread and milk, we engaged several donkeys, and briskly rode up to Meshed Ali, the place where the founder of the Shee sect lies interred. The town is considered by the Persians as sacred as Mecca; and from the most remote parts of India, the partisans of Ali come to perform their devotions, at the shrine of their venerated leader. The mosque, under which the first zealous convert of Islamism lies entombed, is an extensive and elegant building, covered with several beautiful turrets and a gilded cupola, which at the distance of eighteen miles glitters in the sun, like a ball of burnished gold. The place is constantly crowded with pilgrims; and, annually, upwards of a million of people, from all parts of Asia, flock to the holy spot. The government, in imitation of the lawless Arabs on the road to Mecca, who exact a tribute from all Hodgees, levies a tax on every Kербелай, which during the year, amounts to a good round sum, and forms an important item in the Pasha's ledger. The governor of Meshed, a savage-looking *Arnaout*, received us very politely. His Excellency was seated in a small room surrounded by a motley crew of Turks, Persians, Arabs, and other specimens of Asiatic tribes and nations; who, with their pipes and *callisous*, seemed to vie with each other in filling the place with the effluvia of the tobacco plant. We were regaled with a thimble-full of bitter coffee, and a good string of unmeaning civilities. In going away, his Excellency told us that we might convert the Jews who were living in the town, but, with a very serious mien, he enjoined us not to interfere with the Mahomedans. He no doubt thought, that the transition from Judaism to Christianity, was as easy as the pronounciation of the

Mahomedan formula, which is quite sufficient to constitute the greatest scoundrel a true believer.

From the Lesai, we threaded our way through an endless flow of human beings to the bazaar. The streets were literally thronged with pilgrims, who were either going to or coming from the mosque. In the market we met with the few Jews, who alternately reside here and in Bagdad. They offered us antiques and Babylonian curiosities for sale; and we in return, proffered them the most valuable of all antiquities, the Holy Word of God; they were, however, too much absorbed in the objects of sense, to bestow any attention to the things of eternity. Two of them accepted tracts, which they promised to read with care and attention. The sacred precincts of the mosque, we were not permitted to enter; the place being considered too holy, for the profane steps of an unbelieving Gaour; and I confess that the sight of such a vast multitude of perishing mortals, prostrated before the "unknown God," would have been anything but a pleasing spectacle to us. Before we departed, we paid the governor a second visit, his Excellency enquired whether there were such beautiful buildings as the mausoleum of Ali, in Franghistan; and whether we had holy shrines to which we repaired for devotion and penance. The reply to these queries gave him a better notion of our holy religion than he possessed before; and several times he exclaimed "Chak, Chak," true, true, "your creed must have some intrinsic virtue, or else England, Germany, and France would not be so powerful." He asked us to give him a New Testament in Turkish; and as our stock was exhausted, we gave him a copy in Arabic. In going away, he said, "How will you reach Kufah;" and suiting his action to the words, instantly ordered some *Cavosses* to seize a sufficient number of donkeys for our use. The animals, with their distressed owners, soon appeared, and we were expeditiously requested to mount. We did not, however, avail ourselves of his Excellency's kindness, at the expense of others, but paid the regular fare, which amused the worthy officials, who had never seen such scrupulous infidels; and delighted the donkey people, who had never met such conscientious travellers. At four o'clock, P.M., our nimble quadrupeds

brought us back again to Kufah ; we were exceedingly tired, and neither felt in a humour to embark, or to rest under the vertical rays of a burning sun. In this dilemma, we braced up our courage, and boldly entered the *Messed*, an edifice which tradition and history has consecrated to the heart of every pious Moslem. The imams, the conductors of the public service, who concluded from our *Tey*, that we were Turks, treated us with all deference and courtesy. One of them acted as our cicerone, and pointed out to us all the wonders of the place. Several of these time-hallowed localities, extend their antiquity beyond the post-diluvian age ; and a spot was shown us where "Adam and Noah" severally prayed. Abraham, Moses, and other prophets, have also worshipped within this heaven-favoured temple. Some Mahomedan writers of celebrity, even state that it contains three springs of wonderful water, and several other remarkable secrets, which Providence for wise purposes has concealed from the inquisitive eyes of vain mortals. The most extraordinary of all the numerous marvels which have here taken place, is a marble pillar in the centre of the court, which Ali with his powerful arm is recorded to have thrown there from Bussorah, a distance of 250 miles. I asked the Mullah, whether stones had wings in the time of Ali ? "No." "How then can a pillar sail through the wide expanse of heaven ?" "By the might of God all is possible," was the whole explanation. As an historic place, Kufah, amongst Moslems, ranks second to Mecca ; for here the famous battles between Ali and Moawiyah were fought ; and here the brave champion, and lieutenant of Mahomed, at the age of sixty-three, received in his fearless breast the dagger of the assassin.

The Shee'ees have the most profound veneration for the whole plain of Kerbelai ; and their confined dead are brought from every country, town, and village in the East, and interred in the sacred soil, which contains the ashes of their almost divinely revered martyrs, and is considered a sure guarantee for admission into Paradise. Towards sunset we embarked, and with a strong breeze in our favour, we glided over the rippling waters with great rapidity, and before midnight were again in our old quarters. Early the following morning we

started on our homeward journey. For three hours we rode over a desolate waste, which no doubt was once crowded with the teeming multitudes, who occupied the outskirts of the Chaldean metropolis. With the rise of the sun we beheld the "*Birs*," standing like a giant-shadow of by-gone ages in the midst of a desert plain. There have been many conjectures as to the identity of this pile, with the celebrated temple of Belus; but recent discoveries and researches, leave little doubt that the *Birs* derives its name from the Bursif of the Chaldeans, and the Borsippa of the Greeks; which, according to the Talmud, was a locality or district in the city, and an unfavourable place for those who studied the Scriptures, not, as Jewish commentators wisely say, that the air was bad, and made one forget his learning, but probably because here the great Pantheon stood, in which a cringing population were obliged to bow their suppliant knees.

But, whatever historic interest may be attached to this huge mound, it is certainly one of the most elaborate monuments of former unbounded extravagance, and stupendous workmanship. On the summit of the mighty pile stands a pyramidal wall, fifty feet high, fissured and broken on all sides, and shivered and torn on the top. Around the base of this singular wall are large heaps of conglomerated brickwork, which appear like fragments of immense rocks; they bear evident traces of the most violent action of fire, are quite vitrified, and as hard as adamant. This strange phenomenon has been accounted for by scientific men in various ways, but the most probable conjecture is, that the place was surrounded by a great quantity of combustible materials, which, together with some igneous disruption, or electric fluid, accomplished the design of God, and for ever devastated the proud temple dedicated to vain deities of human creation. In descending from this smitten and dilapidated tower, an Arab pointed, at a little distance, to a narrow cavity, which he said was "the place where the fiery furnace stood, in which *Abraham* was cast." It is remarkable that both Jews and Arabs should have a tradition affirming such a fact. The spot, the natives believe, contains many secret virtues, and they would, under no circumstances, throw a stone, or any thing else, in the cave, for fear of offending the *immen loci*.

BIR'S NIMROD.

THE END.





To a traveller who has walked among the monuments of Egypt, visited the marble temple of Palmyra, or reposed, as I have done myself, behind the polished sculptures of Persepolis, Babylon and the Birs awaken no sensations of wonder and admiration; but to the student of prophecy, who gazes upon the fallen palaces, demolished temples, and shattered walls, every mound and tumuli is a collateral evidence of divine revelation; and the fascinating and attractive magnificence of the former is eclipsed; whilst in the latter he sees the verification of the awful sentence, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin."

The muleteer and servants, who could not at all comprehend why we should expose ourselves to the scorching sun, and linger on an antiquated pile which every Arab carefully avoids, for fear of the evil spirits who are supposed to haunt every hole and crevice, looked upon us as renegades from a Bedlam; and several times they inquired among themselves "What are these Franghees doing here? Do they search for gold, scorpions, or serpents? Wonderful people, who court to wander amongst ruins and desolations!" The burning heat at last compelled us to leave a spot which tradition and history have immortalized; for, whether we consider it as the first proud monument of impious, vain mortals; or, with Theodotus, regard it as the grand temple of Belus,—it is calculated to awaken in the beholder the most exalted and moral sensations, and to fill him with devout and holy emotions towards that Being whose hand rules the destiny of individuals as well as of empires.

Our muleteer, who for the last two hours had been diverting himself with his little red clay pipe, which he kept continually replenished, was quite delighted to see us move. We rode at a quick pace over the heathy, barren, and unblest ground, and at two o'clock, P.M., were in our lodging at Hillah. The same afternoon we went to visit our Jewish friends, but it was evident that during our absence some Bagdad acquaintances had prejudiced them against us, for they were determined neither to hear nor to speak on religious subjects. The next day being our Sabbath, we remained at Hillah; a few Jews called on us, who were anxious to dispose of a variety of antiques, which had been collected among the ruins; and, as we refused both to purchase



or examine them, they went away convinced that Christianity was founded on the law of Moses, otherwise we could not be so punctilious about Sunday. The following morning we prepared to start; our arrangements were soon completed, and nothing remained to be done, except to give a *backsheesh* to the landlord; this was, however, not such an easy matter as we anticipated. Our worthy host refused to take any payment, and with great indignation averred, by the lives of all saints and imams, that he had never been so insulted. "What! am I a *Khangee*, that you offer me money for my little hospitality? My father and grandfather have always retained the character of disinterestedness, and shall I pull down the house they have built?" We expressed our regret, and offered many apologies for the unwilling grief we had caused him, which, to some extent, appeased his delicate sensibility. We now thought that instead of silver, a few expressions of acknowledgment would satisfy our entertainer, but we were greatly mistaken; our sentient host did not wish to be paid a dozen of piastres for a few nights' lodging in a stable, he anticipated a *backsheesh* equivalent to half-a-year's rent of his whole premises; but here his calculations failed, and, to the utter astonishment of himself and domicile, we tendered him our thanks for his kindness, and left. This was, probably, the first time that this worthy, whose ancestors had been so distinguished by liberality, had Europeans in his house; and, as he expected that every Franghee must be a rich man, his surprise was not a little heightened when he found that our generosity did not equal his expectations. He followed us over the bridge, to the other side of the Euphrates, and when he discovered that we did not unstring our purses, he made his demand in more unequivocal terms; a long altercation ensued, and to avoid further detention, we paid for the miserable tenement, which we and the buffaloes alternately, and sometimes in common, inhabited, sufficient to have provided us with comfortable lodgings in a respectable English inn, or German hotel. This specimen of Eastern hospitality did not impress me very favourably, and future experience convinced me that Asiatics are the most degraded, uncivil, and selfish people under heaven.

## CHAPTER V.

### APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS FOR ARABIA AND PERSIA.

THERE is no country in the world where the fatal and retrograding effects of Islamism are more keenly felt than in this part of the East. Every object bears evidence of its corrupting and contaminating influence; and the Christian missionary cannot traverse its once fertile plains and cultivated slopes, without weeping over its desolation, and blushing for the monstrosities and crimes of its inhabitants. When this rich and productive region was cultivated; when it abounded with extensive, noble cities; yea, when science, and learning, and every useful art, stood in high esteem and repute, with great plausibility it merited the encomiums which Eastern, and even some Western writers have heaped upon it; but this prosperous period, on which fancy delights to linger, is crushed under the withering influence of Islamism, and the ruthless hand of the Osmanlees. Such a painful and melancholy reverse in the history of the best part of the East, with affecting and thrilling power appeals to the Christian heart; and can those whose minds are enlightened, and whose feelings are refined by the softening graces of the spirit of divine charity, refuse to impart the reviving truth to those less favoured portions of our globe? Shall the followers of the Arabian enthusiast, and the deluded adherents to the 'Talmud, for ever remain ignorant of that name by which a sinner alone can be saved? Shall no prayers pierce heaven's azure vault? Shall no self-denying efforts be made for the salvation of benighted millions in Arabia and Persia? These considerations induced the Committee of "The London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews" to make some more vigorous and energetic efforts in these interesting countries, and Mr. Sternschuss and myself were requested to

visit Persia and Kurdistan, places hitherto disregarded by the benevolent and religious societies of Britain.

Towards the end of December, 1846, we embarked on our expedition, in one of the boats which trade between this city and Bussorah. Our vessel, like everything else on board, participated of the immutable character of the East: it was of a long, narrow-shape, with a bow in the curved form of a Turkish slipper; low, but rising far above the water, and a small cabin in the stern, for the accommodation of travellers. This part of the ship, which was about eight feet by ten, and four high, we engaged at an exorbitant price, there being no other boat to compete. In the evening we went on board; we found the whole vessel crowded, every nook and corner was occupied by men, women, children, and horses; who, conjointly, produced such clatter and din, that it seemed impossible for any one to know what the other wanted. Sometimes, when the human noise subsided, a fresh revolution commenced among the restless horses, who could not brook the confined places to which they were closely riveted. Our captain, a young Arab, who killed the time by smoking, sat mute and motionless in the bow; the sailors, however, compensated for the *Rais'* taciturnity, for they screamed, vociferated, and stamped, as if the boat was to be propelled by noise and confusion, more than by wind and oars. After half-an-hour's prodigious clamour of tongues, we set sail, and slowly moved along over the placid waters of the Tigris. At midnight the boat was moored, and all composed themselves to sleep on the rain-softened banks of the river. At day-dawn, the oars were again plied, and we glided on without anything to interrupt or disturb our progress. The morning was most beautiful, and the banks of the river, lined with extensive date and orange groves, bathing in the glow of the slanting sunbeams, gave even the desert, which was only visible through the apertures of a dense forest, an interesting appearance.

I could well fancy the prosperity of this country when its waste places were tenanted, its ruined cities thriving towns, and nature and art both united to sustain the fame of this celebrated region. The whole of this fertile country, cultivated by industrious husbandmen, irrigated by the unfailing waters of the

Tigris, and governed by equitable and just laws, must have realized the beautiful fiction of the golden age. The mind, however, recoils from the contemplation of these happy days, which are gone for ever, and unless the religion of the Gospel supersedes the Koran, the curse which now, like a contagious pestilence, clings to it, will never allow it to emerge from the depth of misery into which it has sunk.

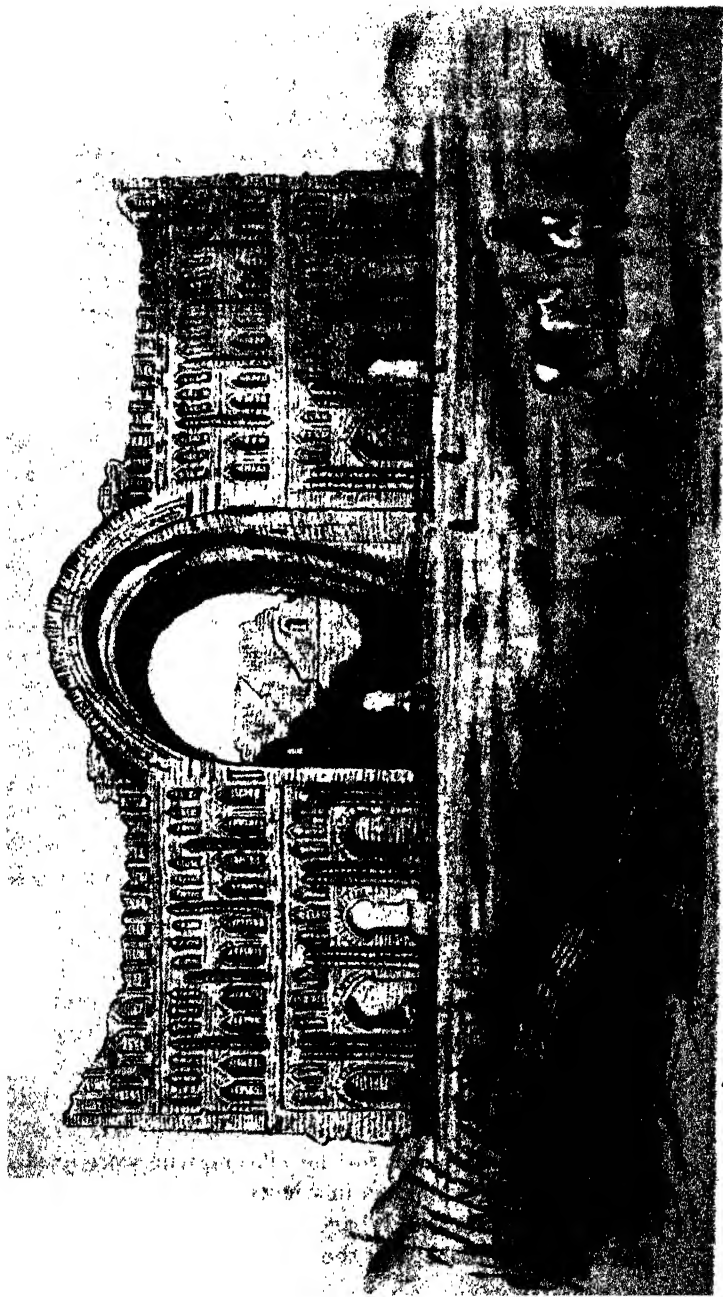
We rowed and sailed till evening prayers, or sunset; at which important time of the day a *seyid* (descendant of the prophet), with a low voice called the followers of the Arabian enthusiast to perform the stated prayers. Most of them immediately commenced the various prescribed ablutions, a ceremony disgusting and repulsive even to the refined Turk, and the educated Persian. Their devotions were devoid of all solemnity and seriousness; some would ask for a pipe, and between every *Fathat*\* take a few whiffs; others cursed and swore at their neighbours for pouring ashes on the carpet on which they were saying their *namoz* (prayers); three only, out of thirty-four, went through the various evolutions with apparent seriousness and sincerity. How much more dignified is the true Christian, when, in the spirit of deep humility and overflowing gratitude, he bends his knee and lifts up his heart in adoration to that Great Being, whose providential care watches all his steps, and supplies all his wants. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

Our night was most uncomfortable, for the rain and wind continued without intermission. The passengers forgot all minor differences, and Jews, Christians, Turks, and Arabs, in the greatest amity, united to erect an awning against the drenching showers. The sailors alone, like true amphibious animals, seemed to disregard the contending elements, and with their pipes, which were every minute extinguished, sat on the muddy banks, singing melancholy ditties. Only now and then, when a violent gust of wind made the sides of the boat groan, did they change the key, and utter some deafening shrieks. The next day, towards noon, the sun, which had been concealed

\* The first chapter of the Koran bears this title.

behind dark misty clouds, made his appearance, and reanimated the benumbed and shivering limbs of the ship's company. The wind, also, changed in our favour, and endeavours were made to hoist the sail; but, unfortunately, the rain had so increased its weight, that it was difficult to raise, and dangerous to suspend, such a heavy burden on a long fragile mast. Happily, besides a large square sail, the Bussorah boats have a bowsprit, on which we unfurled the jib, which, filled with a strong breeze, carried us at a good rate over the ruffled and agitated waters.

On the 25th we passed Ctesiphon, and the ruined walls of ancient Sileucia. I had heard so much of the famous Arch of Khosroe, that I could not pass without paying it my respects. Our captain, who, like every Arab, thought that the year has twelve months, and whether he arrived a little earlier or later in Bussorah, could make no difference to him or others, at once complied with my request, and landed me. I had a fatiguing walk before I reached this wonder of antiquity, and I confess that, although I am no great enthusiast, yet the sight of this magnificent arch absorbed my whole attention, and made me forget my wearied feet, the boat, and the walk back. The Arch, or Tauk-e-Kesea, from the distance, owing to the flatness of the soil, has an insignificant appearance; but a nearer approach, reveals to the eye the remains of a building worthy in every respect of the luxurious and extravagant monarch whose name it bears. There is no building in the East that can vie with it, in size, magnificence, or skill; the archway alone is 106 feet high, 153 deep, with a façade 284 feet long; it is ornamented with small arches and recesses, which were no doubt occupied by statues and symbolical images. I have two busts in my possession, one of a king, with a crown on his head, and the other with a wreath encircling his brow, both of which were found close to the Tauk. The natives, who like to dilate on the wealth, power, and prodigality of Khosroe, relate that the niches in the wall, the lowest of which is 27 feet high, were intended as places for the officers, who were prodigiously tall, to leave their slippers in when they attended a royal levee. Some even relate, and I have heard it affirmed by respectable Mahometan mullahs, that the kitchen which supplied the table



THE ARCH OF KOSROE AT CTESIPHON



of the imperial household, stood in Kippel, about thirty miles distant, yet such was the telegraphic dispatch with which the dishes were forwarded, that they invariably reached the palace boiling hot.

There are many large mounds scattered over the plain contiguous to the Tauk, to which the natives have given their several designations with such certainty, as if they had been consulted in the topography of the place. Some learned writers, both ancient and modern, have conjectured that Ctesiphon occupies the site of Calueh, one of the cities founded by Nimrod; and its position and proximity to Babel, affords great plausibility to the supposition. According to Assemani, it was the ancient seat of the Nestorian Patriarchs; had numerous churches, pious pastors, and an honourable body of martyrs, who sealed the truth with their blood. The Jews, who have always been numerous in this part of the East, also formed a considerable portion of the inhabitants, and not unfrequently united with the Magi in maligning the Christians, and in representing them as enemies to the king, and friends of the Byzantine emperors.

But what has become of the city, whose greatness was once the glory and pride of the rulers of the East, and the envy and ambition of the governors of the West? Where are the impregnable walls which arrested the conquering arms of Herodius? Where the sumptuous halls in which the ambassadors of conquered and allied nations paid their court to the great king? What remains of all this wide extended supremacy, this unbounded wealth, and unparalleled prosperity? Nothing but yawning mounds, putrid sepulchral urns, and a dilapidated and deserted palace. It is, however, good and instructive to walk among these silent tombs of by-gone nations; for whilst they teach us the vanity and emptiness of all sublunary power and greatness, they unfold at the same time the awful prospect of the landscape of eternity, and lead to the contemplation of Him whose mysterious power is seen in all the events, phenomena, and laws which govern this universe.

Our ship's company in the enjoyment of their morning doze, quite forgot me, and the palace of Khosroe, and leisurely sailed along. I was not at all prepared for such a surprise, when my



servant came running to me and exclaimed, "the boat is gone." "Gone;" I repeated, and at the same moment I climbed on a mound, and straining my eyes in the direction of the river, I espied at an immense distance something white floating in the air. There was now no time for reflection, but at once we betook ourselves to our legs, and, as if engaged in a race, leaped over ditches, rushed through thickets, and tore over mounds and dales with such agility that we frightened the flocks of sheep and goats which were browsing near the margin of the river. After an hour's run we came in sight of the boat, and with roaring voices hallooed, "Rais, Rais." Half-a-dozen shepherds joined our chorus, and our united shouts produced the greatest terror among the feathered and croaking inhabitants of the jungle, and attracted the attention of our crew. A boat was at once dispatched, and we were again safely brought on board. The Rais, instead of apologizing for his neglect, with the countenance of a well practised dissembler, asked me, why I did not inform him that I was going to the 'Tauk. I convinced him of his falsehood, and all that he could say was, "Allah Acbar" (God is great); an excuse little appreciated by myself or exhausted servant. This fatiguing march had given me an excellent zest for breakfast, but a new misfortune intervened, the boat came in shallow waters, and with a violent jerk which sent tea and cups rolling over the cabin, grounded. All was instantly confusion, tumult, and clamor, every one seemed to vie with his neighbour in making the most prodigious noise. The Rais alone, with a calmness becoming his dignity, did wonders. He threw off his blue shirt, jumped into the water, and like a fish swam and dived, disappeared and reappeared; now he was heaving in the bow, then again pressing on the sides, determined to prevent the boat from sinking deeper. The saying of Seneca, "*Longum iter est per præcepta breve et efficax per exempla*," was verified here, for the sailors, abashed by the activity of their chief, imitated his example, and with some strenuous exertion and toil, the boat moved, and our canvass and a strong wind carried us safely into the middle of the stream. In the evening we moored our vessel under a high bank, overgrown with bushes and dwarfish trees, and imme-

diately all commenced preparations for supper. Mr. Sternschuss and myself also disembarked, and leisurely sauntered about near the temporary encampment. Suddenly two men, who had been concealed behind the bushes, started up, and like ferocious animals ready to seize their prey, darted upon us with uplifted clubs. We retreated in all haste, exclaiming, "Charamy!" (thieves). Mr. S., who was behind me, received a slight brush, which took the cap from his head. Our whole party were instantly on their legs, but the two ruffians, conscious that they had a strong protecting force in the rear, only moved a score of yards. Our own bronzed and valiant sailors did not venture to advance; they overwhelmed them with imprecations and curses, which the latter received with perfect equanimity and indifference. During the night several attempts were made to plunder our boat, but a strong musket fire defeated the object of the assailants, and kept them at a respectful distance.

With dawn we left this inhospitable bank, and with grateful hearts for our providential escape, floated noiselessly over the smooth waters. We passed thousands of Arabs, who, with their droves of buffaloes, horses, and sheep, covered the plain far beyond the verge of the horizon. The Arabs who inhabit this part of Arabia, amount to upwards of a hundred thousand souls, they are perfectly independent, and recognize no other power than that of their hereditary sheiks. Their depredations frequently annoy the Turkish authorities, who, without being able either to subdue their haughty spirit, or curb their predatory inclinations, must yield to the insults which these errant tribes offer to the representatives of the Vicegerent of Mahomed. Every new sheik according to custom, requires to be invested with a *khalat*, or robe of honour, by the Pasha of Bagdad, or Bussorah, and as these dignitaries occasionally smart under some insult, and refuse to comply with the usual practice, the sheik, without any farce of ceremony, informs the governor that he intends to pay him a visit with ten or twelve thousand men; this announcement generally produces its intended effect, and the *khalat*, with all modesty and diffidence, is proffered to the new sheik. Two of these tawny gentlemen, accompanied by a ragged well-armed suite, paid our captain a

visit, for which honour he had to open his purse and make handsome presents of money, pipes, coffee, tobacco, &c. Their attentions were, however, not strictly confined to the captain, for with piercing scrutiny they eyed everything on board. Mr. S. and myself, in particular, attracted their eagle looks, and without waiting for a *tête-à-tête* communication, we retreated to the cabin. When they were gone, our Rais assured us that if he had told them we were Europeans, a handsome *baksheesh* would have been extorted from us. "To what nation did you assign us?" "O, I swore you were Persians, in the employ of a man at Bussorah." "But you told an untruth." "Agaib, an untruth, let these *cafars* eat dirt and not steal; and now, by the life of my beard, you must give me a *baksheesh* for having saved you a hundred keraunt," (about 5*l.*). We promised him a sheep at the next encampment, which quite delighted the worthy commander and his famished crew.

During the night we anchored under the walls of the mausoleum, which contains the mortal remains of Ezra the scribe, and before the dusky twilight was blending its faint shadows with the whitening streaks of the dawning morning, we stood at the shrine of this "holy man of old." The loneliness of the place, the dull and dreary aspect of the heavens, and the murmuring sound of the agitated river, beating with its muddy waves against the miry banks, all combined, in unison with the scene, to sadden the heart, and depress the spirits. "Is this desolate wild thy melancholy resting-place, O man of God," I almost involuntarily ejaculated, as my eyes rested upon the mean and insignificant building, which Jewish liberality has raised to the memory of a man, whose zeal, abilities, learning, and piety, tended so much to reform their corrupt captive forefathers. I intended to copy the inscriptions on the walls, and the epitaph on the sarcophagus, but the gloom and darkness of the vault rendered it impossible. Our servant went to the boat in search of a candle, unfortunately, however, our stock was exhausted, and neither the Rais, nor any one else in Bagdad, encumbered his luggage with such luxuries, and we were, therefore, obliged to content ourselves with what could be seen by the dim glimmer of a dirty little oil lamp, which is per-

petually burning. The external aspect of the edifice, at a simple glance, convinces the most cursory observer, that it is a barbarous modern structure, devoid of all beauty and magnificence. It probably owes its origin to some pious Jews, who in their zeal for the honour of the distinguished dead, destroyed the dilapidated ancient mausoleum, and raised on its site this present shapeless building.

We had now been seventeen days on our voyage, sufficient to test the patience, and task the forbearance of the best temper ; but the approach to Bussorah, and the very idea of passing the next night under a walled roof, was quite enough to diffuse a cheerful glow over every countenance. Even the Jews, and a pugnacious insignificant Jerusalem rabbi, with whom we had many zealous and vehement arguments on the voyage, and who thought it his duty, in conformity with his character, to be hostile to us, forgot the gulf which prejudice had raised, and with candour and honesty, he and his co-religionists spoke on the subject of religion, and received a few tracts.

At sunset we came in sight of Bussorah ; two important personages connected with that ridiculous bugbear, the passport department, paid us an official visit. These haughty individuals, who had all the insolence and arrogance of the men in authority, examined a lot of passports, which they could not even read a line of, with such scrutiny, that it elicited the sarcasm of our fellow passengers, and excited the choler of our Teskedgee. Abuse, insult, and all sorts of opprobrious epithets, with which every Asiatic tongue is so fully charged, followed each other in such rapid succession, that before many minutes had elapsed, blows and cracking lashes were promiscuously dealt out, and innocent and guilty, both came in for their share. The fray might have terminated very seriously, had not our valorous champions taken the safer course, and jumped into a *gufah*, or boat, which, amidst the execrations of nearly two scores of voices, carried them out of the reach of their formidable antagonists.

At nine o'clock we reached our destination, and cast anchor near a few other vessels, whose crews, from the silence which reigned in them, were no doubt sunk into unconscious repose.

The next morning we engaged a *bellom*, or small ferry, and favored by the tide, rowed swiftly up the creek into town. My original destination and sphere of labour was Bussorah, and from what I had read about it, I pictured to myself a large populous city, worthy of the contest, which, only three quarters of a century ago, it occasioned between Persia and Turkey. The first glimpse of its deserted streets, ruined houses, and general loathsome aspect, convinced me of my mistake. Even the bazaars, which in all Eastern cities have a gay and animated appearance, did not diminish the first impression. Most of the shops were either closed, or in such a dilapidated state, that they could not with safety be intrusted with any wares; and the few booths where some scanty merchandize was exhibited, looked so poor and wretched, that it appeared to me their object was only to enhance the forlorn aspect of this former emporium of wealth and pride.

The misery, poverty, and wretchedness of the market and houses was visibly reflected in the sallow and haggard countenances of the people; not a single robust frame or healthy complexion delighted my eye; languor and dejection marked every face, and the worm of death was apparently gnawing at their very vitals. The English agent,\* a man of great fortune, and who had every luxury that wealth could procure, was not exempted from the malignant fever, from which every one suffers; in fact the inhabitants are so accustomed to it, that as soon as they feel the symptoms of the distemper, they leave their avocations, and repair to their couches till it has subsided. On one occasion I was engaged with several persons in an interesting conversation, when, suddenly, I noticed the livid paleness of death overspreading the countenances of two of the company; I asked them whether they were unwell, and they laconically, with blanched lips, replied, "it is only fever," and retiring to a corner of the room, laid down till the paroxysm of the attack had subsided. The fever lasted about an hour, and although, the two individuals were shivering and trembling, and all their nerves shattered with the most violent convulsions, no more notice

\* He has, since the above visit to Bussorah, fallen a victim to the prevailing malaria.

was taken of them, than if they were sipping a cup of coffee, or indulging in the soothing fumes of the *tehibouk*. This sad malady, with which all the inhabitants and most visitors become afflicted, is entirely to be attributed to the negligence of the government, who, with a most reckless and culpable indifference about the welfare of its subjects, does not contrive any plan to improve the salubrity of a place, which in the course of two years, would amply refund, in a just impost, every disbursement. The pashas, who, like vultures, feed on the wreck of this and every other Eastern city, never think of spending a *para* to improve the town, or advance the health and prosperity of the inhabitants. Every six hours, they see the rolling tide overflowing the banks and converting the most luxuriant soil into a miry bog, where, under the auspices of the Sultan's lieutenants, the most destructive diseases and maladies, are engendered and perpetuated; yet they never take any measures to mitigate the miseries of the people under their control, or alleviate their hopeless sufferings. "Give, give," is their only motto: and as if this passion for money was entwined round their hearts, with relentless cruelty they will ring, from the very desolations which their own negligence have accelerated, those sums after which their cupidity is constantly panting.

Thirty years ago, Bussorah contained upwards of sixty thousand inhabitants, it had a thriving trade, well-stored bazaars, and a happy, rich population; at present it does not contain eight thousand, its commerce (except that of dates) is destroyed, its opulent houses impoverished, the large caravanserais desolate, and the market, thronged by nations from all regions in the East, is now only frequented by a few sickly Persians, and some plundering Arabs.

This place, famous in history, and immortalized by the battle called the "Day of the Camel," might with little expense be restored to its pristine grandeur, but under the supine and avaricious rule of the Grand Turk, its destiny is irrevocably sealed. The Jews, like every one else, have been deep sharers in the woeful fate of this town; according to their own account, nearly two thousand succumbed within the last few years, to the violence of the unsparing epidemic, and more than a hun-

dred scrolls of the law, show that the number is not much exaggerated. At present, besides some Persian Jews, who on account of oppression have been driven to seek shelter amidst the desolation of this place, the community does not count more than thirty families, and these I expect, could they gain a subsistence anywhere else, would gladly emigrate. We visited their synagogue, which is situated in a remote corner of the town; it is a neat building, and bears evident marks of the former prosperity of the congregation.

The rabbi, a bigoted Jew, who only knew Christianity from the deformed rites of Popery, seemed very much disinclined to enter into any discussion with people whom he considered worshippers of silver crosses, and old rags.\* Our knowledge of Hebrew, however, allayed his rising passion, and as if touched by a magical wand, the sounds of the sacred tongue restrained the storm of invectives, with which he intended to overwhelm us. Our conversation, or discussion, which at first threatened to be warm and stormy, was temperate and mild; and both the rabbi, and all the rest of the Jews, who had followed at our heels, heard for the first time the glorious tidings of a crucified Saviour. The next day, our learned acquaintance accompanied us to the school, where twenty boys were sitting on a mat, repeating at the top of their voices the portion of the Bible appointed for the following Saturday; the noise and inattention of the children and the filthy smoky room in which they were confined, showed that it was not a place very favourable for study. We made several translate a few verses from the Old Testament, which they did with such irreverence and levity, that it quite pained me. We gave them a short address, in which we exhorted them to love their Bible, and to treasure up its sacred truth in their tender hearts; they readily promised to do so, and gratefully grasped the tracts, which we gratuitously distributed among them.

\* The Roman Catholics here wear a small bag round their necks, which the cunning priests stamp, and sell as identical pieces of the Virgin's petticoat.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A WORD TO THE MAHOMEDANS.

ON the 14th of January we quitted Bussorah, the returning tide carried us down the creek to the river, where the ship which was to convey us across the gulf to Bushire was at anchor. On our arrival on board, the *Nakhada* was absent, and the sailors in every nook and corner, like so many lifeless trunks, lay fast a sleep. With the assistance of two passengers we got our cases of books safely stored, and the cabin, in which all kinds of rubbish and filth had accumulated for many months, if not years, thoroughly swept. When this Herculean task had been performed, we joined our fellow passengers, who were sitting on deck, and recounting the adventures which each had met with, on his journey to the birthplace of Islamism. I asked them, whether they felt their hearts improved since their visit to the Kaba of Ali. "No," was the reply; "but we are conscious of having done a meritorious and holy action." "Then the only satisfaction you derive from your wearisome journey, is self-complacency, and pride." "Have you no particular shrine where you pay your devotions," interrogated they. "No; we believe in God, who is every where present, and our most holy shrine is the secret closet." Our Hodjees were greatly interested in the conversation, and, without losing temper, listened to the various Gospel truths which we brought before their notice.

Our captain, a stout fat Persian, made his appearance in the evening; he was quite astonished at our punctuality, and, with great *naïveté*, said, "You Franghees imagine that everything must be done by the watch; we, on the contrary, seldom carry such an article, as twenty-four hours do not make any material difference to us." Early the next morning, the preparations were made for sailing; there was, as usual, a great deal of



bustle among the groups of passengers, and the ragged savage crew : at last the anchor was weighed, the huge unwieldy sail unfurled, and our boat afloat on the ancient rivers Tigris and Euphrates, which mingle their sweet waters twelve hours above Bussorah. Our voyage down the stream, between banks covered with shady groves of palm trees, and enlivened by the braying of donkeys, neighing of horses, and melancholy ditties of thousands of half-naked tawny Arabs, greatly enhanced the pleasure of our voyage, and before we were aware how many hours we had been sailing, we found ourselves near the mouth of the Gulf, where we cast anchor for the night, and enjoyed a comfortable and undisturbed night's rest. We met here several other vessels, bound for India, laden with horses and dates, the only export articles from this country. This latter fruit constitutes the staple trade of this impoverished district ; and affords the means of subsistence to a declining population, who entirely depend upon the produce which nature, without much labour, spontaneously supplies.

Wind and tide did not in the least influence the movements of our phlegmatic captain and idle crew ; he was determined to spend a day with Arab friends, and nothing could change his mind or alter his resolution. After a night and day of inactivity, during which all our passengers were eating, smoking, quarrelling, and singing, we at last put to sea ; our course was less prosperous than a Hodgee, who had great faith in astrology, predicted. For six days we were driven about by storms and unfavorable winds, sometimes quite out of our course, and again guided by the feeble glimmer of a few distant stars, whose pale and thin light penetrated the hazy clouds. On the sixth day, to the infinite delight of all our sea-sick passengers, we saw Bushire rising on one side from the deep sea, and on the other from an illimitable desert plain. We were driven with great violence by a sharp north-wester into the inner roads, where the sea is more sheltered, and soon landed on the quay, which was busy and crowded with English seamen and native merchants. We walked between this animated multitude up an undulating street to the house of Satour, an Armenian merchant, who received us with great cordiality and hospitality. We met there

several British officers, and also Dr. Campbell, the medical attaché to the Residency, a gentleman of great talent, profound skill, and deep piety; qualities estimable any where, but more particularly so in the East, where vice and impiety have been so assiduously promulgated by Europeans, whose Christian name and profession ought to have dictated to them nobler methods of benefitting a nation already too deeply sunk in the vices of civilized nations.

Bushire, the great port of Persia, like most towns on the shores of the Gulf, is a small thinly inhabited place. Its population, though not exceeding 2,000 souls, consists of a most motley miscellany of races, religions and sects. Besides the followers of Ali, and the grave adherents of Abu Becker, Omar, and Othman, there are the Talmudical Jew, the deluded adorer of fire, the superstitious worshipper of Indian idols, and the uncharitable Armenian Christian, who in his pious zeal has learned to blend the vapid vagaries of Paganism with the solid truth of the Gospel. In the midst of this chaotic confusion of creeds, there is one little place, one retired chamber, where the Christian truth is felt, and the God of the Christian sincerely worshipped. Colonel Hennell,\* the political agent of the East India Company, an excellent devoted Christian officer, who, combined with his exemplary life, exhibits to the ignorant and misguided beings by whom he is surrounded, the beauty and sublimity of our divine religion. It was with sincere pleasure, that, during my abode in this benighted place, after the toils and labours of the week, after many hard struggles and severe combats with the opponents of light and knowledge, I could every Lord's-day mingle my voice in the praises and thanksgivings of the few who collected together in the small chapel of the Residency.

What a splendid mission might not Britain accomplish, what a dazzling focus of light might she not shed over enslaved Asia, if all her representatives would exercise the influence they possess for the moral emancipation, and the mental improvement, of the degraded races among whom they are located;

\* This highly esteemed officer, to the regret of all the natives and many a European, has retired from his post, and left Bushire.

hitherto, however, this great object has been overlooked, and the missionary in passing through these regions, in the bitterness of disappointment, finds, alas ! too many traces of the refined vices of Europeans, and hears their names associated with unblushing immoralities.

During our stay we came in contact with many of the different creeds and sects, which constitute the population of this seaport ; some, as might be expected, derided our object, others scorned the message of salvation, and only a few paid serious attention to the words of eternal truth, on which the issue of life and death are pending. Among the latter I noticed several Jews, to whom the doctrines of life and immortality proclaimed in the Gospel, were indeed "glad tidings of great joy." On one occasion I went, accompanied by Dr. Campbell, to the synagogue, and after prayers addressed the assembly. They were, like most Jews in the East, exceedingly ignorant ; all they knew was that they belonged to the family of Israel, and that all Israelites would finally go to heaven. Of a Messiah, who by his own vicarious sacrifice was to atone for sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness, they had never heard ; even the exalted nature and character of the great Redeemer, though typified in the glorious manifestation of the Divinity on Sinai, and other numerous occasions, and so plainly delineated and shadowed forth by the prophets, was a sealed and incomprehensible subject among them. My discourse, however, astonished their minds, and roused their consciences ; and many went to their houses convinced that rabbinical Judaism is not the most perfect and unalloyed system of belief. One individual, in particular, was struck with the beauty and glory of the new covenant ; the scales, as it were, fell from his eyes, a new light beamed on a darkened mind, and through the curses of the law were unveiled to his heart the tidings of life and immortality. This person was the teacher and rabbi of the Jewish community ; a man of some learning, and highly respected by the people over whose spiritual welfare he watched. The enlivening spark which the grace of God once kindles in the heart is not so easily extinguished ; and Mullah Eliyahu, though he endeavoured to lull his conscience asleep by the opiate of rabbin-

ism, the voice of truth roused him from this dreadful self-delusion. Now, no longer undecided which path to tread, he eagerly reads the sacred oracles; the divine plan of salvation, in its consummate perfection, is unfolded to his understanding; no longer silence seals his lips,—“I have found the Messias,” is his rapturous exclamation; and neither contemptuous incredulity, scorning ridicule, or the virulent violence of his relations and friends, can chill his hope, or cause the tide of heavenly joy which animates his heart to ebb backward. Two years after he requested me to baptize him. Here a new difficulty contravened his anxious and yearning desire, the governor of the place instigated by the Jews was determined to defeat his plans, and the Resident, unwilling to offend Colonel Sheil, the British Envoy at the court of Persia, whose unkind and unfriendly feelings to us as Protestants, and Protestant missionaries, were well known, hesitated to afford him that protection to which, in case of emergency, as his servant,\* he was entitled. In this predicament he resolved to accompany me to Bagdad. The morning of our departure arrived. The Jews, in a melancholy procession, and with many tears, follow their respected spiritual guide to the place of embarkment. Our sail is unfurled to the breeze, and we cut through the surging waves, which every moment threatened to dash our boat into pieces. We had not been plying the briny deep an hour, when we were hailed and summoned to lower canvass; we were soon surrounded by about a dozen police, and Mullah Eliyahu was seized and brought back to Bushire. I immediately wrote a note to Captain Kembell, the Assistant Resident, Major Hennell being out of town, and with a promptness most creditable to him, he remonstrated with the governor, and the mullah, pale and trembling, was conveyed back to the ship, and suffered to accompany me. He remained three months in Bagdad, was baptized, and returned again to his native place, where his consistent walk and Christian life reconciled his family, and removed many of the prejudices which the Jews had imbibed against our holy religion.

\* Mullah Eliyahu was the Seraf to the Resident, an appointment which he still holds.

Whilst we were at Bushire, four schooners of the Honourable East India Company, and a frigate of Her Majesty's, were at anchor in the roads, which gave the town an unusually animated appearance, and filled the narrow lanes, and dusty streets with officers of all grades and ranks. The sailors, too, contributed their share in infusing life into this quiet and cheerless place, and many natives, who were glad to gain by their liberality, were still not sorry to see themselves freed from men who understood no language,\* and whose reply to the most civil question was an outstretched arm, a clenched fist, or a fierce-looking countenance. The visit of these strange ill-tempered foreigners, whose only recommendation was their generosity, struck terror into the very heart of Persia, and reports were rumoured that the English had come with a large fleet, and huge unfailing guns, to seize Fars. Even the people of Bushire had their conjectures, and with divided opinions, which I often heard expressed in the public streets, they watched the movements of this armada. The Shah himself was haunted by sad dreams of disaster and ruin, on account of the *fifty* invincible ships,—for the number in travelling to the capital had necessarily swollen,—and the stoutest heart at the court, and in the royal city, was filled with dismal apprehensions and agonizing fears. The fleet at last set sail, without performing those gigantic feats and terrible exploits which occupied every tongue, and the principal commercial seaport was again hushed into its usual deathlike silence and inactivity. The weather during our stay was most delightful; the temperature, which throughout the summer months is very oppressive, was mild and pleasant, and we scarcely ever required a fire, or needed to close our windows against the blowing north-wester. In June, July, and August, however, the inhabitants suffer all the agonies of a damp and close atmosphere; everything glows with the heat of a burning furnace; even the water is tepid, and requires to be cooled in deep brackish wells, with which every house is provided. Most of the dwellings have on the terraced

\* The lower classes in Persia and Arabia, look upon a person who does not understand their language as a most pitiable, ignorant, and abject being.

roofs a kind of kiask, constructed from the branches of the palm tree, or the green grass of the desert, in which the natives shelter themselves during the summer nights, from the burning winds and the drenching dews of the sea. Those who sleep without this shelter, generally rise covered with sand and soaked with dew, which gives them a most comical and muddy appearance. Whilst this broiling heat continues, the air is actually laden with damp vapours, and impregnated with the poisonous effluvia of many a stagnant pool, even to breathe is difficult, and life a misery and burden. Yet, notwithstanding these prejudicial effects of the climate, the people are robust and strong, able to endure the greatest hardships, and capable of performing the heaviest tasks. Even the women, whom nature fits for less ardent toils, possess great physical strength; and I have many a time noticed whole parties of these bronzed belles, coming from the wells with skins containing twelve or fourteen gallons of water, strung across their supple, sinewy arms, and walking along with the greatest ease and agility. This early drudgery, and over-exertion of the physical powers, to which the people are subject, carries, however, in its train evils of infinite magnitude, and hastens scores of unrepenting and unforgiven sinners to an untimely grave.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### CRUIZE ROUND THE PERSIAN GULF.

BEFORE I proceed on my journey, I must be pardoned if I devote a chapter to a cruize round the Persian Gulf, which I made in the spring of 1848, in one of the Honourable East India Company's vessels, under the command of Commodore G. C. Hawkins. The object of this voyage was both to recruit my health, which cares, excitements, and a toilsome journey\* from Ispahan to Bushire, in the rigour of winter, had shattered; and also to make known the message of the Gospel, in places where the foot of the missionary had never trod, and the tidings of salvation had never been proclaimed. That this object was realized will be seen from the following diary.

*March 2nd.*—Being the day fixed for leaving Bushire, I went with Commodore Hawkins, commander of the squadron in the Persian Gulf, on board the Honourable Company's ship, "Clive;" and very soon after the signal was given, our vessel, accompanied by the "Constance," one of the East India Company's schooners, set sail. We steered S.S.W., and having a bright sun shining above us, and a brisk wind filling our swelling canvass, we glided over the surging waves with such swiftness, that we soon lost sight of Bushire and its cheerless barren desert.

The next day, at noon, we espied a small island; the Commodore immediately sent an officer and midshipman, whom I accompanied, to ascertain its correct bearing. We rowed for about an hour, and then reached the island, which we found to be situated in  $27^{\circ} 59'$  N. latitude, and longitude  $50^{\circ} 80'$ , covered with wild geraniums, skeletons of innumerable turtles, corals,

\* The reader will perceive, from the subsequent pages, that this precipitate departure from our sphere of labour, was occasioned by the Consul's refusal to afford our mission, at a most critical period, a mere nominal protection.

shells, and other products of the sea. Towards evening we returned to the ship, and with a fine breeze shaped our course south, towards Bahrein, and anchored next evening on the briny waters, famous for their hidden treasures of pearls.

Bahrein is a fertile, extensive cluster of islands, about forty miles in circumference. It was formerly in possession of the Portuguese; had many towns, and scores of villages; but when these enterprising settlers were driven out of the Gulf by the English and Persians, in the time of Shah Abbas, the islands fell into the hands of Arab sheiks; and since that time they have been the constant arena of strife and bloodshed. The hand of the son has frequently been imbrued in the blood of the father, and the hand of the younger in that of his elder brother, in order to obtain the government of the place. These intestine feuds have proved detrimental to the prosperity of the districts on the western coast, weakened the force of the various sheiks, and reduced the number of their cities and villages to an incredible extent. Only a month before our arrival, the ruling sheik of Bahrein, Mahomed ben Khalifa, by stratagem murdered the sheik of El Biddah; and whilst we were there, he was engaged in a war with his uncle, Abdallah ibu Achmed, a notorious robber and a famous pirate; and no doubt one of them will fall a prey to the inexorable vengeance of the other.

Bahrein is famous on account of its pearl fishery, from which the shiek derives a great revenue, and most of the people their support.

The island at present consists of three considerable towns—Manuma, Maharaz, and Arad; in the former there are eight Jewish merchants, with whom I passed many hours in most interesting conversations. They were all well-informed men; and, in the beginning of our acquaintance, obstinate defenders of the doctrines of their rabbies; but, by the grace of God, they gradually yielded to sounder and better convictions, and with pleasure, yea delight, listened to the message of salvation, which I proclaimed. Their principal objection was the doctrine of acceptance with God, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. I endeavoured to show them that man, by the fall, became alienated from God, lost the Divine favour, and could



only be reconciled to his offended Maker through the medium of Christ, the friend of sinners. They acknowledged that some parts of Holy Writ inculcated what I stated ; yet their proud, Pharisaical hearts could not be humbled and brought to confess that we are entirely dependant on the merits of a Saviour, for our title and claim to eternal life, and that all our righteousness is but as filthy rags in the sight of God. I gave them three New Testaments, and two "Old Paths," which they gratefully accepted. One of them accompanied me to Maharaz, and introduced me to several respectable Arabs in the place, with whom I had long discussions. On my return to the ship, I offered my good guide a remuneration for his kindness, and the trouble I had occasioned him ; but he told me that my desire to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare, and the interesting conversations I held with them, had involved himself and his brethren under great obligations to me, and he felt delighted to have had the opportunity of rendering me a small service in return. I did not expect to meet such a disinterested Jew on the island of Bahrein ; but it shows that wherever the Gospel is preached in sincerity and love, the effect is irresistible, and the motive appreciated.

*March 9th.*—Being the day fixed for weighing anchor, the Commodore, with ten officers, went on shore to meet the sheik. As I was invited to accompany the party, I repaired with them to the Honourable Company's agent, where the sheik and his brother soon arrived. They were attended by a train of well-armed Arabs, and several Nubian and Abyssinian slaves. The sheik himself was a short, ferocious-looking man, of a dark complexion, black rolling eyes, and an unsettled piercing glance. He answered, in every respect, the prediction given of Ishmael, at his birth,—that he should be a wild man. The brother was rather a mild and amiable person, with a pleasing countenance, long beard, keen eyes, beautiful teeth, glossy rich hair, and most graceful deportment. They received the Commodore with the greatest civility ; apologized for not having been on the spot before his arrival ; and we entered into conversation with all the ease, frankness, and independence of the unfettered and unrestrained inhabitants of the desert. My plain dress,

amongst so many officers, with gold-laced caps, glittering epaulettes, and terror-striking swords, at once marked me out as an object of curiosity, and led them to inquire what office I held on board the ship. On being told that I was a Christian mullah, they at once abandoned the subject of diplomacy, and with great seriousness and caution, began to converse on the more important topics of religion.

The first question the sheik asked me was, whether we prayed? I answered in the affirmative. He then continued, "Do you invoke the Prophet Mahomed?" I again replied, that Christians did not acknowledge Mahomed, nor consider him a divinely-inspired prophet. His brother, Sheik Ali, interrupted me by saying, that the Jews had informed him that Mahomed was foretold and predicted in Holy Scripture. To their astonishment I flatly contradicted the truth of this assertion. As the sheik and his brother had never read the Bible, they requested me to state some of the principal doctrines of our holy religion, as contained in the Scriptures. I told them that our Bible described man's innocence and subsequent fall, unfolded the mercy of God to lost sinners, and declared to every true believer a gracious Saviour, a perfect sacrifice, a general resurrection, a final judgment, and a never-ending existence beyond death and the grave. These important topics quite engrossed their attention, and absorbed their minds. Sheik Ali entreated me to give him an Arabic Bible. I expressed my regret that I had not a copy with me, but promised to send him one with Commodore Hawkins, when he made his next cruise. This satisfied the inquisitive Arab; and the conversation assumed again its former tone; but he did not feel any longer interested in the subject of debate, for his mind could not be diverted from the topics we had just discussed; and, as if unconscious of those around him, he inclined politely towards the Commodore, and with faltering voice implored him not to forget to bring the Bible; in fact, he appeared to think of nothing else except what I had told him about our holy religion; even when the whole party had separated, and the mutual greetings ceased to ring in my ears, Sheik Ali followed us, and whispered, as if afraid of the servants, "Do not disappoint me, and forget the

Torah and Angeel!" The Commodore assured him that he would be very happy to attend to his request; and I have much pleasure to add, that he is now in possession of that valuable book, which alone is able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. It was a pleasing reflection, and I felt grateful to God for having chosen me as the instrument to scatter the word of truth amongst the very tribe and descendants of the false prophet.

As I was on board a ship-of-war, whose political relations with the inhabitants on the coast would not allow me any direct interference with the religion of the natives, I was obliged to circumscribe my own usefulness; yet, I trust that my feeble labours, by the help of God, were not in vain.

From what I have personally observed and experienced, and from the reports and information I obtained from the natives, I am led to suppose that Arabia must be a vast and promising field for missionary enterprise. There are, it is true, mighty dangers to be encountered, and innumerable trials to overcome, before the missionary can gain access to a people scattered over a formidable country; but the hope and prospects of success amongst the multitude of Jews, both on the coast and inland, and the glory and sublimity of proclaiming the great truths of Christianity amongst the descendants of the false prophet, ought to enhance the object in the eyes of the faithful servant of our Lord, and preponderate against the fear of the most insuperable difficulty.

At our return from this state visit, a favourable breeze sprung up, of which we took advantage, and shaped our course east, towards Assaloea, 134 miles from Bahrein, and anchored, after twenty-four hours' sail, on that coast.

Assaloea is situated on the Persian coast, close to the sea, and in front of some majestic ranges of grey rocks. It was formerly notorious for its piracies and atrocious murders; but since this trade of blood has been suppressed by the Honourable Company, the inhabitants, whose restlessness and ingratitude could not be checked, except by continual excitement, commenced fighting with other tribes, and ruined themselves and several neighbouring chiefs.

There are a great many Jews in the vicinity of this place. Nahcud, a village an hour's distance, contains fifteen Jewish families. The Commodore promised to land me there ; but, unfortunately, on Sunday, immediately after Divine Service, a violent wind compelled us to unfurl the sails, and get into the open sea. Our ship, driven onwards by furious winds and boisterous waves, made great progress during the night, and at eleven o'clock, A.M., we had sailed one hundred and five miles, and anchored at Charrack. This place is one of the most miserable and wretched on the coast ; and for this the inhabitants have to thank their own sanguine tempers, which cannot exist without war and bloodshed, rapine and plunder ; and though they plunge themselves and their neighbours into the very jaws of destruction and ruin, yet they relentlessly persevere in their wild hostilities. Previous to our arrival, the people of this locality had an engagement with the Arabs at Magos, a place fifteen miles from Charrack, in which, on both sides many were killed, and scarcely one escaped without being wounded or bruised, either from swords, lances, pistols, or guns. I went on shore with the doctor of the "Clive ;" and no sooner was it known that the *Hakim* had arrived, than the whole population hastened to obtain medical advice, till at last the doctor was weary with prescribing, and myself exhausted with interpreting.

*March 15th.*—We got again under way ; a light breeze filled our sails, and gently drove our ship in the direction S.E. half E., round the Cape Certes, in the Bay of Magood, where we remained thirty hours. This place, which contains about a hundred and fifty houses, and many tents ; is entirely inhabited by a wild and rapacious tribe of the Wahabees, whose depredations, a few years ago, occasioned great troubles to the Sultan, and Viceroy of Egypt. They profess the Mahomedan creed, and adhere to the principles and precepts of the Koran ; but they are not so fanatical as the *Sonee*, or Turks ; nor so superstitious as the *Shee*, or Persians. In fact Abdal Wahceb, the founder of this sect, may be regarded as the first reformer of Islamism, in the heart of Arabia.

I saw most of the inhabitants whilst on shore ; they all appeared exceedingly ignorant, and knew nothing more of their

own religion, than that it enjoined a certain number of prayers and ablutions, and promised an eternity of bliss to all the followers of the servant of God (as they style Mahomed). Of our holy religion they had never heard, and when I told them that the English believe in the Gospel, and gave them an epitome of our sacred history; they gazed at me with distended mouths, and wondering eyes; and after a short pause, replied, "We know that the Ingreese have large ships, big guns, and good soldiers, but we never thought that they had any religion, or believed in such a good book, as you say the Angeel is."

The Arabs on the whole of this coast, though they are revengeful and martial tribes, are nevertheless an acute and sensible people; and if they were brought under the benign influence of the Gospel of the grace of God, they would no doubt soon become an active, energetic, and industrious nation. I asked one of the mullah's, a sun-browned, desperate looking-man, whether there were any Jews in the place, and he tritely replied, "We cannot repose our heads by night without expecting to have them separated from our shoulders before the morning, and do you think that the Jews, who would excite the cupidity of our own people, and the inexorable vengeance of our enemies, could possibly venture to reside amongst us." As I had nothing to object to the solidity of such forcible arguments, I tacitly acquiesced in what the Mahomedan doctor said.

The Arabs along the whole coast, appear to have the greatest regard and esteem for the English name, and treat the Honourable East India Company's officers with great deference. I was frequently astonished to see an independent, warlike, and intractable chief, whose sword was still reeking with the blood of his enemies, and whose eyes were gleaming with the fire of desperation, sitting before the Commodore, and listening to his counsel and advice with unlimited faith, and unbounded confidence. It is gratifying for the missionary to behold British influence extended over these wild regions, as it may alternately tend to introduce the Gospel of peace amongst the savage tribes, and lead them to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

After sunset we sailed again; the evening was delight-

ful, the sky serene, the air soft and pure, and our canvass sufficiently swelled to carry us imperceptibly over the smooth surface of the briny deep. We steered S.E. by E., and I believe, if the dream had not been previously dispelled, the lovely aspect of the heavens above, and the beautiful tranquillity of the sea beneath, would have united to feast my imagination with the idea, that we were indeed approaching the fancied Arabia Felix,—the unexplored terrestrial paradise. In the morning the wind freshened up, and at twelve o'clock next day we anchored at the barren desolate waste of Arabia, close to the town Targa.

This barbarous coast was, twenty-eight years ago, so infested with pirates, that a small fleet could not pass without being attacked, the ships plundered, and the men butchered. There is only one lady, the widow of the late Colonel ———, now in Europe, who, after six months imprisonment, miraculously escaped the hands of these unfeeling ruffians. Of all the other numerous vessels which they captured, not a soul was ever saved. Their maxim was, "since the Koran interdicts the robbing of the living, first, 'In the name of the most merciful God,' to slaughter the crew, and then pillage the defenceless ship." The Indian Government, for a long time did not take any notice of these formidable enemies, but when they saw that the insatiable robbers, not only destroyed their commerce in the Gulf, but also on the western coast of India, they sent, in 1819, a strong fleet of thirty ships, against the pirates of Targa, and Ras-El-Kheima. An obstinate engagement, both by sea and land, took place, in which the English were victorious. The natives were defeated; their fleet, which amounted to upwards of forty strong built ships, burnt and sunk; their town and fortifications destroyed, and their power for ever successfully annihilated and ruined.

Targa is one of the most miserable places I ever saw. It is built along a sterile beach, formed of corals, shells, and other saline plants and products of the sea; it consists of a thousand mud and sand-built houses, and an equal number of tents, and contains a mixed population of black slaves, and dark swarthy Arabs. During the summer, when the violence of the sun by

day, and the successive moisture by night, continue to exert their influence on the numberless putrified fish, which lie scattered on the shore, the air becomes infected with a noisome effluvia, the land a sink of pestilence, and men and beasts scarcely know where to hide themselves, from the agonizing stings of insects, which haunt them everywhere. There are no Jews in Targa, or Ras-El-Kheima; but the natives confirmed the report, that thousands of them lived in Yemen, and the Hedjaz. I asked the sheik whether he would give me a passport to conduct me safely to Nedjed; he at first consented, but after a little longer deliberation, he said it was quite impracticable, as the road was unfrequented, the season far advanced, the climate pestilential, the stages long, and the hardships indescribable; and concluded his whole string of arguments, by saying, you are still very young, and my face would become black in the eyes of the *Ingreese*, if my men should be obliged to bury you in the road. As I saw the justness and accuracy of these observations, I at once abandoned the plan of prosecuting my journey, at this season, into the interior of Arabia.

*March 20th.*—Early in the morning, a cloudy sky, hazy atmosphere, and heaving sea, the precursors of a north-wester, which is always dangerous on this coast—abounding with destructive shoals and coral reefs—were signals for weighing anchor and making sail. A soft easterly wind had just carried us away from the coast, when the dreaded north-wester came blowing over the wide expanse, and covered it with heaving waves and foaming billows. In the evening the tumultuous flood was again lulled into profound tranquillity, and our ship glided almost motionless over the glassy deep. In the morning we had a land breeze, and in the afternoon moored near the *Tomb*, an uninhabited island, where we stayed two days, in order to repair the boats and also to afford a little land exercise to the ships' crews.

On the 24th, at four in the morning, we neared the island of Kishm, thirty-three miles distant; and cast anchor at twelve o'clock, on its north-western point, opposite Bassadore. This island which is of considerable extent, was for a long time in possession of the Portuguese, had many towns and fortifica-

tions; but when these enterprising traders were driven away by the united powers of England and Persia, the destructive ravages of misgovernment made such havoc, that not a vestige now remains to show its departed greatness, nor a trace to point out the place of this once famous emporium of Eastern trade. After the suppression of the piracies on the Arabian coast, the East India Company turned it into a station for their squadron, which they kept there to protect their trade; they built houses, erected magazines, constructed a hospital, and made the breasts of the natives swell, with the hope of soon seeing again a city, and lucrative bazaar on their desolated island. This pleasing vision however, soon vanished, for the summer, with its intense and violent heat, proved detrimental to the health of the conquerors; disease began to make its deep inroads amongst the officers; fever spread among the sailors; the houses which had only recently been built, were evacuated; the islands abandoned, and only fourteen soldiers were left (who were still there) to guard the stores of the company. Thus were the expectations of the natives, who derive their means of subsistence from the few vessels that pass here, for ever blighted.

Towards evening, I went with the Commodore on shore to take a walk; on our landing, the soldiers were drawn up in a line to salute the Commander of the squadron, and to receive orders and instructions. After this we inspected the hospital, which is a spacious and strong-built edifice, and from thence repaired to the cemetery, a place crowded with the tombs of officers, sailors, and one lady. It was a sad and melancholy spectacle to see the place, where so many Europeans had been interred on a foreign shore, most of whom died, without having any one near to smooth with spiritual comfort, the awful descent into the gloomy chamber of corruption.

On our return, three Jews accosted me, and requested a solution of some questions connected with our religion; I told them that I was engaged then, but would come on shore next morning. At sunrise I met my three acquaintances, of the preceding evening; they gave me a kind and deferential *salaam*, and, *en passant*, informed me that some Jews in Bushire, had warned them against me as a dangerous character, who had



caused a great sensation in their community; but as my personal appearance did not justify such a severe charge, they were anxious to hear the doctrines I propagated. I readily availed myself of this request, and fully declared to them the mysterious and merciful plan of redemption, through the blood of the crucified Saviour. In the beginning of our discussion, they were rather obstinate, and upon the clearest evidence, would not admit that the merits of Christ's sufferings could confer such inestimable benefits as I stated, upon the whole human race. I read to them Isaiah liii., and compared it with Jeremiah xxiii. 6. They acknowledged that these passages of Scripture inculcated the truth, that through the atoning death of the Messiah, the sinner obtains forgiveness, and through his righteousness is reconciled to his offended God; "but," added they, "this may refer to the Gentiles, and not to the Jews, for we have a law which will save us." I told them that if they acted in perfect conformity to the divine law, and with unremitted perseverance observed every precept contained in it, they might expect salvation upon such legal terms, but since there is not a righteous man in the world, it is impossible for any person to be saved, except by repentance and faith in the blood of the Messiah. They granted that our doctrines were entirely deduced from the Word of God, and, with much sincerity, simultaneously confessed, that they never thought that Christianity was based on such good and solid foundation. I gave them two New Testaments, and sold three Bibles.

*Sunday, March 26th.*—The sacred day of rest, is on board the Honourable Company's ships observed with a decorum and respect, which reflects the greatest honour and credit on the Indian Government. Whilst on board the "Clive," I always looked forward to the Sabbath with a delight and pleasure I never experienced on shore; in fact, the very thought of being on the water, surrounded by all the wonders of the deep, fills the heart with subjects for meditation, and abstracts the mind from all worldly themes. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters," says the Psalmist, "these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

At eight o'clock all manual work ceased, and the sailors retired to dress. At ten o'clock, both the native troops and European seamen were mustered; and immediately after the church was rigged; the chairs, capstan bars, and shot boxes arranged for seats; and at half-past ten the bell tolled, the flag was hoisted, and Divine service commenced. My kind friend the Commodore, in order to afford to the crews of both ships an opportunity to hear the preached Gospel, always contrived that we should lay at anchor on the Sabbath. My congregation, consisting of about one hundred and twenty seamen, and thirty officers, presented a striking and deeply impressive sight. During Divine service, great solemnity prevailed, and the sailors, notwithstanding their dislike to sermons, did not manifest the least impatience; but with much devotion joined in the prayers, and with undivided attention, listened to the inspiring words of righteousness, temperance, and judgment, &c., &c. This morning I preached from Hebrews xiii. 14. The cemetery, which was in full view from our nautical church, forcibly brought the words home to the hearts of my audience, and I could see tears running down the furrows of several weather-beaten cheeks, whilst I spoke of the shortness of life, the certainty of death, and the necessity of constant preparation.

Some of the sailors, who by my ministry were brought under the regenerating influence of the Gospel, expressed their feelings to me in writing; and, as the letters breathe the spirit of contrition, confidence, and piety, I must be pardoned if I make an extract or two, for the purpose of magnifying the grace of God, and exalting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—the effectual instrument and power of salvation to every one that believeth. One of them writes:—

“By the infinite mercy of God, you have been directed to this ship, to speak the glorious truths of the Gospel to a number of men who greatly need it, in order to induce them to leave the service of sin and Satan, and seek refuge under the glorious banner of the cross. O how your words sunk into our hearts this morning! God grant that the impression may never be weakened! We, sir, have been those bold blasphemers to whom you addressed those words of peace and hope; we have com-

mitted iniquities and crimes too horrible to relate. O do not think it presumptuous thus to write, for to whom can we go more appropriately than to a holy minister of Christ, sent by Providence in our road, to guide and direct us. Will you, reverend sir, oblige us with a copy of the sermon you preached this morning? Although we remember the greater part of it, yet some words may have escaped us; and this day, with God's blessing, will not be forgotten by many of us. O sir, I felt for some of my shipmates, who avowedly came to have afterwards something to scoff at and ridicule; but their attention was arrested, and I hope that they will seek for mercy, as myself and companions have been led to do."

In another letter an individual says:—

"Thanks, ten thousand thanks for your kindness to me and my beloved companions, who are now on shore, myself being the only one of them on board. Sir, the enclosed letter, a copy of which I shall forward to the Archdeacon Jeffries, in Bombay (who often exhorted us to repent), will show you how horrible our former conduct has been, and how anxious we now are to walk with Christ and his people. Your words, dear sir, have sunk into my heart; for I assure you, that if you had been three years ship-mate with us, you could not have spoken to us more feelingly; you seemed to all of us to have been acquainted with our sinful lives, and to have always addressed people like myself and shipmates."

Thus the Lord, in his infinite mercy, graciously owned my feeble efforts, not only on shore, amongst the stubborn Mahomedans and unbelieving Jews, but also on board the ship, amongst those who had been baptized into the profession of the doctrines of the Gospel.

*March 29th.*—I met again my Jewish friends; they told me that they were reading the New Testament, and found it a most interesting and captivating book; every sentence replete with wisdom, and every page fraught with lessons of the sublimest morality. "If you think the Gospel steeped with Divine knowledge, as it really is, why do you not come to Christ to be saved?" They replied (with diffidence in their own words), "We trust in Moses and our Chachamim."

*March 30th.*—A strong south-easter urged us to leave Bassadore. The wind, which was in our favour, hastened us over the rugged waters, at the rate of seven miles an hour. At noon we reached Linga; the Commodore gave orders to heave to, in order to receive the sheik, who came for the despatches from the Resident, in the Persian Gulf. As there were several Jewish families residing in the town, I wanted to visit the place, but the wind was too strong to permit any procrastination. The sheik's business was quickly finished, and we soon lost sight of Linga, and, in the darkness which closed around us, of every other object that might interrupt the monotony of the liquid expanse. In the morning we passed Keish, a small island decked with fresh verdure, and covered with extensive date-tree groves; and a little higher up, on the southern coast, we doubled Ras Cheroo, a picturesque little town on the edge of the sea, skirting a sun-burnt heath. In fact, the ungovernable wind carried us on with such rapidity, that an endless succession of towns and villages appeared to line this wild and desolate coast, and made it look quite prosperous and thriving.

Towards evening, the wind which bore us so expeditiously along, suddenly changed, the air became tremendously agitated, the sails fluttered, and before many minutes passed, a furious north-wester, with resistless impetuosity, lashed the foaming billows over our ship, and threatened to engulf us in their yawning caverns. I entirely resigned myself to the will of Him at whose bidding the roaring winds hold their peace, and the turbulent waves are still; and confiding in His protecting care, I passed a tolerable night, unconscious of all the perils and dangers around me. The storm, which raged incessantly during the night, continued to increase in the morning. The thermometer, ranging from 80° to 94° two days previously, suddenly fell to 54°; some of the sails were split, others carried away, several spars splintered, half the crew on the sick list, and all countenances filled with horror and dismay. This terrific commotion of the warring elements lasted till Sunday, when to our great delight, the sky cleared out, the wind calmed down, and the sun, hidden under dusky clouds, shed his cheerful beams on

the heaving surface of the troubled waters. The Commodore afterwards assured me that he never encountered so violent a north-wester in the Gulf before. Two native vessels were lost in the storm; and had it not been for his unwearied vigilance, by day and by night, our ship would have sustained much more serious damage. By frequent tacking we managed to get up to Congoon, and anchored there at midnight.

Congoon belongs to the Government of Fars. It was formerly a large and populous town; but discord, anarchy, and war, have demolished the houses, destroyed the streets, and driven the poor inhabitants from their homes and fields. At present abject poverty prevails in the place, the land is uncultivated and covered with weeds, the farmers' cottages deserted and levelled to the ground; and the few inhabitants whom necessity detains here, are day and night in arms, in order to repel the Dashtees, their most inveterate and powerful enemies. There are eighteen Jewish families in the town; a few years ago they exceeded triple that number, but the constant harassing feuds of the contending clans, compelled them to seek shelter in Geludar, a place ten *farangs* distant from Congoon. I visited them several times, and always met with an encouraging reception. They had never heard of our holy religion, except through the corrupt channel of some Armenians, and all I said was therefore quite new, and full of interest. One of their community, Mullah Salomon, a man of great reputation on account of his Talmudical learning, strenuously defended Judaism, and inflexibly maintained that since Israel was still in captivity, Messiah could not have come. I told him that his allegations would not stand the test of Scripture, since, in the Word of God it is expressly stated, and incontestibly declared, that Messiah was to come before the destruction of the temple; and that he was to be rejected and crucified by the Jews, acknowledged by the Gentiles, received into heaven, and come again at the end of the world, when all Israel would repent, and hail Him as their long expected Saviour.

As I corroborated all these important topics with Scripture passages, my learned antagonist, who had braced himself against the truth, got ill-tempered; and, to vindicate the orthodoxy of

the Jewish creed, he first asserted that Messiah was come; then that He need not come; and lastly, that He was in Paradise, and would not come until the day of judgment. The inconsistency of these statements, extorted pointed remarks from his flock; and the rabbi, to divert their minds from such a subject, turned to me, and ingeniously asked what need there was of a new revelation, since the old contained everything necessary for our salvation? I replied that, although the Old Testament convinced us of our fallen, lost, and ruined condition, and explained to us the origin of evil, and the cause of all our misery; yet it was the New Testament which furnished and supplied us with a remedy in the atoning blood of the Son of God. Before we separated the rabbi yielded to better convictions, and with tears in his eyes, he grasped my hand, and declared, in the presence of the Jews, that I was the first Christian who sympathized with their misfortunes, was not insensible to their unhappy condition, and laboured for their present and eternal welfare; and with great solemnity, he added, "I appreciate all you have said, and in future will venerate your Messiah." I sold them eight Bibles, and gave, as presents, four New Testaments.

*April 12th.*—At twelve o'clock the deep sound of a gun announced that the squadron was about to sail. The sea was rather rough, and the wind high; but both the Commodore and the captain of the "Constance" were experienced seamen, and with great dexterity steered the ships through the stormy sea; and, notwithstanding the disadvantages of wind and tide being against us, we safely accomplished, on Saturday morning, the voyage up to Bushire.

At noon I left the "Clive." I had now been thirty-five days on board; and, though most of the officers and crew were but little interested in missionary effort, or in favour of missionaries, I was always treated with deference and respect; and I believe there was a feeling of mutual regret when I took my departure.

Some months after the above cruise, I received from the officers and sailors of the squadron a silver inkstand and pocket case of sacramental vessels, as a token of acknowledgment for my humble efforts whilst amongst them.

The inkstand bears the following inscription :—

PRESENTED

TO

THE REV. HENRY STERN,

BY

COMMODORE HAWKINS

AND THE OFFICERS AND SEAMEN OF THE SQUADRON OF THE INDIAN NAVY,  
STATIONED IN THE GULF OF PERSIA,

IN APRIL, 1848,

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF THEIR SENSE OF HIS ZEAL AND ABILITY  
IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS SACRED FUNCTIONS,  
AND OF THEIR  
GREAT PERSONAL ESTEEM FOR HIS  
PRIVATE CHARACTER.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### RESUMPTION OF MISSIONARY NARRATIVE.

I PROCEED again with the narrative of my journey. On the eve of the new year we intended to leave Bushire, but a heavy rain, which had converted the plain into an extensive marsh, detained us for another night under the roof of our kind Armenian host. On the second of January, we bade farewell to most of our Jewish and Gentile acquaintance, and with the sincere regret of many, issued forth from the gates of this port. Our caravan had encamped near a cemetery, close to the walls of the city, and here, among the silent ashes of the dead, and the monotonous clamour of the living, we passed a few restless hours. I had spread my carpet on a patch of grass, near a marble tablet, which covered the narrow chamber of one, who, no doubt, as his epitaph was long and well engraved, played once a great figure among his countrymen, but who was now numbered among the forgotten multitudes who had acted their part on this world's stage ; and his sepulchre, which displayed some pride and rank, even in the dust, was desecrated by the profane muleteers, who dined on it with such zest, as if the emblems of death sweetened their frugal meal. Past midnight we abandoned this patrimony of the heirs of decay, and under a sparkling sky, whose solemn radiance corresponded with the unbroken silence of the desert, proceeded on our journey, and travelled till two hours after sunrise, and then encamped in the open field, near Isawandee. The cold of the night, which had penetrated every pore, and chilled the very heart-blood, was succeeded by a close and sultry day ; and, for the space of six hours, we suffered all the agonies which heat and glare can inflict. The next march, like the previous, was during the stillness of the night, when the air is bracing, and men and animals can better toil over rugged hills and tedious plains, than in the bright light of day, when sun



and glare unite to exhaust the weary and over-burdened beast, and the way-worn traveller. These nocturnal journeys have, however, their concomitant evils, and the traveller in the inhospitable regions of the East, where civilization has not yet provided for every physical and moral want of man, soon finds that the constant interruption of his necessary repose gives an irresistible faintness and langour to his frame, and communicates a blight to his heart, which soon extends itself to his imagination, and blunts both feeling and taste. Such sensations I frequently experienced after having passed several restless nights ; the most enchanting scenes, where nature had reared the loveliest temple, neither affected nor interested me ; hills, valleys, trees, flowers, and streams, I passed with sullen apathy ; the morning star was my only point of attraction, and with yearning impatience I occasionally raised my eyes to the eastern horizon, to see if this planet, the harbinger of approaching day, had already made its appearance. Caravan travelling is another evil, to which, with horror, every one who is limited in his disbursements, must necessarily submit. Those who can keep their purses constantly unstrung, are easily provided with escorts, who will conduct them safely from stage to stage ; but one who travels under less favourable auspices, is compelled to attach himself to a slow, toiling caravan, has to endure excruciating agonies and annoyances. Every minute he feels his strength relaxing, and his head growing dizzy ; sleep, too, that overwhelming intruder, aggravates the bodily exhaustion, and the traveller attempts in vain to banish drowsiness, by cold lavations, or fatiguing walks ; every nerve must be strained, and each faculty roused, to infuse some life into the prostrate frame, in order to complete the nearly finished task. Even the hardy muleteers, who have constitutions of iron, and muscles of steel, frequently, after several nights' march, are not proof against exhaustion ; and many a time I noticed worn out drudges throwing themselves on the ground for a few minutes, or following, with sleepy steps, the patient motion of the slow moving animal. Rich muleteers generally rouse their passions and excite their bodies, by a terrible potion of opium, which relieves them for a while from the depressing influence of arduous and

incessant labour, and imparts an artificial elasticity to their energies; but it is a dangerous remedy, and generally produces a prostration, which can only find relief in an incessant recourse to this slow devouring poison.

After a few night's struggling exertions, I became reconciled to the change, and longed for the repose of day, as the wearied labourer does for the recurrence of night. The most tedious part of the journey was always as the *munzil* receded from us, this I painfully felt to day, and at every few steps I asked the muleteer what distance we had traversed, and when at last the beautiful date-groves of Boraz-goon burst on our view, I experienced a most exquisite sensation of delight. We unloaded under the gateway of a ruined caravanserai, where we found a sheltered corner to spread our soiled carpets, and enjoy a little rest. Afterwards we visited the Jews who reside in this place, they had been apprized of our intention by their countrymen in Bushire, and without exception received us with great kindness and unaffected cordiality. Nearly the whole community accompanied us to the synagogue, a dark miserable hut, consisting of four bare walls, and a broken uneven clay floor; there was not a book, except a few parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, with which Dr. Wolff, many years ago, presented them. Their mullah, a venerable old man, gave us a touching, and artless description of their miseries and woes, and the affecting picture of indigence, poverty and degradation which we witnessed here, and in other cities of Fars, where once proud rulers courted their friendship and protected their rights,\* was sufficient to suffuse with tears eyes less accustomed to such sights than our own. We made a short address, in which we assured them of our sympathy with their hapless position; explained to them the cause of their present captivity, and pointed them to Him, who alone could loosen their chains and burst their prison bands. The words of pity and com-

\* After Persia fell under the scimitars of the Arabs, the Jews stood in such high esteem by the Caliphs, that Ali gave to Bostani, "the Prince of the Captivity," a morose and captious bachelor, the daughter of Isesdeegird, the last of the Sassanian rulers.—Vide *Khore Haddorah*, p. 3.

miseration from the mouths of strangers had a thrilling effect upon this fallen community, and with eagerness they drank in the words of life and peace, as they fell from our lips. We gave them several Bibles and New Testaments, which they clasped to their bosoms with gratitude and joy.

The number of Jews in Borazgoon is very limited, being only ten families, but like all their co-religionists in this unhappy land, they are subject to great sufferings and severe oppressions; their houses, or rather hovels, which are within a mud enclosure, afford neither sufficient shelter from the keen frost of winter, nor the scorching heat of summer; the furniture corresponds with everything around,—a parcel of old carpets, some ragged coverlets, and two or three cracked earthen jars are all the moveable property of these sombre and melancholy abodes, where happiness is seldom known, and security never felt. In the afternoon, Mahomed Hossein Khan, the governor, accompanied by a numerous train of servants, paid us a visit. He expected to find an *Elchee*, or ambassador, but the appearance of our portable establishment convinced him without any enquiry of his mistake; nevertheless, without betraying his disappointment, he asked us about the object of our journey, and why we visited the Jews. He appeared much astonished at the interest we took in the conversion of a people upon whom he had learnt to look from his infancy with scorn and contempt. He invited us to be his guests for the rest of the day, adding the usual unmeaning courtesy “mal-i-man, mal-i-shamoh,” my property is yours, and yours is mine.

Our Jewish friends continued to linger round us till evening, and then with sincere regret observed the shadows of night inviting them to their families and homes; they gave us many blessings at parting, and expressed the ardent hope of seeing us again at some future day. At two o'clock in the morning the bells of our mules began to tinkle their monotonous sounds; we immediately rose, loaded our animals, and amidst the usual brawls and recriminations of the muleteers, emerged out of our cold night quarters. Towards day dawn, we found the atmosphere, as we advanced, becoming more and more impregnated with the offensive smell of sulphur, or naphtha, which oozes out

of the ground, and sends its obnoxious odour for many miles in circumference. Here also the barren uncultivated plains, whose wastes extend to the edge of the sea, began to lose their unvarying aspect, and several ranges of mountains with their bold outlines bounded the horizon. Our road, till we came to Dalakee, was rugged and undulating, and we were obliged to move in measured steps, lest the animal or rider should be tempted to prove the hardness of Persian stones. The sun had nearly reached his meridian height before we came within sight of the village, and though hunger, thirst, and cold, had unsparingly assaulted us in regular succession, still we felt that rest would be more grateful to our wearied limbs, than any of the luxuries of life Dalakee could offer to our palates. This kind of existence, though painful to body and spirit, is no bad ordeal for the missionary; it inures him to hardships, accustoms him to privations, and trains him for activity and future usefulness.

At midnight, the coarse voices of our muleteers, and the subdued hum of the travellers, as they issued from the filthy cells of the caravanserai, in which, in large groups, they had bivouacked, were the unmistakable warnings of approaching departure; our loading, as the road was unsafe, and every one anxious to be in the centre, the most secure part of the caravan, did not occupy much time. The path, till we came to the Kottul-e-Mullah, was tortuous and winding; here, however, our wandering eyes in vain conjectured the difficulty of an ascent up a perpendicular mountain, estimated at 1200 feet altitude. Our muleteers did not share our cogitations; they fastened tightly the loads, put off their sandals, and like mountain-goats, clambered over precipices and rocks, with the greatest ease and agility. To us the task was more laborious; every few minutes, we were obliged either to lean against a detached piece of rock for support, or to throw ourselves upon a grassy brink, overlooking a formidable, yawning precipice. The view towards the summit of the ascent, was picturesque and grand; on one side was a chain of high hills, whose fringed outlines stood in bold relief against the northern sky; in the deep ravines below was heard the roar of the dashing stream, as it rolled over the rugged bed, or was broken

into cascades by bold cliffs, which interrupted its free current ; whilst far above us, the lowing of browsing cattle, and the shrill notes of the shepherd, which now and then broke upon the stillness of the landscape, added a charm to the scene around, which nothing could surpass. About ten o'clock, we emerged out of this mountain-region, and came upon a fertile, well cultivated plateau ; the soft soil gave new elasticity to the animals' feet, which was not diminished by the sight of the caravanserai, whose red walls, gleaming at intervals under the rays of the over-cast sun, invited us to a welcome repose. The caravanserai of Konar-Takht, is one of the most spacious and best I have seen in my peregrinations in the East, but unhappily, like every other building of this kind, which charity has raised for the accommodation of the way-farer, it is rapidly falling into ruin and decay. In fact, that generous impulse, which once animated potent and wealthy Persians, to construct these useful memorials, which have outlived their names is now utterly crushed, and a depraved vicious feeling has supplanted its place among their corrupt and polluted descendants. Almost every caravanserai during the winter, is converted into a common stable ; not a room or corner is kept clean from defilements of all kinds ; wandering tribes, or haughty governors, alternately occupy with their numerous trains of women, horses, mules, donkeys, &c., the places intended to shelter the traveller from the inclemency of the weather, and the violent assaults of men. Sometimes it happens, that these friendly shelters became the arena of severe conflicts and dangerous fights, which invariably terminate in the effusion of blood, and the plunder of some property. A scene of this description occurred between our muleteers, and the servants of some Persian Khan, and though the former outnumbered the retinue of the latter, still as they were well armed, the poor Dgervedar, several of whom were already wounded and bruised, would have had but a poor chance of escaping without dangerous and serious maltreatment, had not, fortunately for them, the big Lord, with a stentorian voice, commanded a cessation of hostilities between the angry combatants.

At ten o'clock I was roused from my sleep ; this short night's rest seemed only to mock my exhausted and wearied frame

without restoring its expended energies, but though it weakened my constitution, I still preferred travelling under a sky sparkling with numberless stars, than under a sun darting beams of fire on the head. Our path, for a road it could not be termed, lay between narrow glens and irregular precipices; sometimes we had to wind our way through a defile, pent up by crested rocks with huge projecting promontories, which threatened every moment to detach themselves, and to bury whole caravans under their crushing weight; or, again, we had to climb up an alpine height, with a deep rugged ravine on one side and perpendicular steeps on the other, whilst the path was scarcely broad enough, to allow a loaded animal to pass without the assistance of two or three muleteers. On the summit of the pass, called Kottul-c-Cumaredge, we entered a fine table-land, covered with verdure, and sheltered on all sides by nature's lofty ramparts. The caravanserai, which stands at the entrance of the plain, looked ruined and deserted, and I could not but regret, in my own mind, that such magnificent monuments of departed charity should be allowed to dilapidate, and become useless.

On emerging from this fine verdant vale, we entered a rugged defile, difficult and dangerous to traverse both for man and beast. Our heavy burthened mules, however, accomplished with great confidence and care this wearisome task. We passed several Rahdarees, or toll-houses, where guards are stationed to keep the road free from marauding hordes, and to levy tolls on merchandize; but, unfortunately, they perform only the latter part of their duty, and whilst they subject every load to a certain impost, they expose at the same time the goods of the merchant to the rapacious grasp of the robber and freebooter. Our own caravan, till we came in sight of Kanzeroon, was full of fear and apprehension, and every one had provided himself with some missile weapons to repel the daring gangs who infest the country, and make it exceedingly unsafe for caravans; happily, as the Rahdars informed us, the robbers had some better game to chase elsewhere, and so we escaped without any personal encounter. We reached Kanzeroon at five o'clock, and without making any particular inquiries about lodgings, we

entered the first hovel where we found an empty corner, and there, contented with a little milk for dinner, laid down near some smoking cinders, and enjoyed a repose which many a less exhausted frame might have envied. Sleep, "tired nature's calm restorer," revived us again; and our first care on rising from our carpets was to get our abode a little swept, cleansed and humanized; after this we sent to the mullah of the Jews, and informed him of our intention to visit his people. The worthy rabbi, an old decrepid man, no doubt anticipated that we were rich travellers, and wanted to purchase antiques, for he and some of his friends forestalled us, and followed close at the heels of our servant. Their salaam was most cringing and humiliating, and when we addressed them in Hebrew, and invited them to be seated on our carpets, they appeared almost in doubt whether their ears did not deceive them. The mullah, who was not far from threescore and ten, and totally blind, in an ecstacy of joy exclaimed, "Welcome, welcome, ye children of the covenant and heirs of the promise; welcome in the land of the Medes and the Persians, ye travellers from far countries, and messengers of joy to the captives of Zion, whose hearts are throbbing with fear in a strange land, and among a cruel people." Here the afflicted rabbi burst into tears, which, partially sincere and partially feigned, still affected us, and we endeavoured to console them by directing their minds from their suffering condition on earth to the peaceful abode of the believer in heaven. The words of comfort were like balm to their wounded and lacerated hearts, and they listened with intense interest to all we told them. The venerable grey-bearded rabbi was evidently struck by the numerous prophecies from which we proved the veracity of our belief, and with his sightless balls turned to heaven, he exclaimed from the depth of his heart, "O thou, who in mercy hast loaded my declining years with sorrows and woes, reveal to this heart those saving truths which my blind eyes can now no longer examine or investigate." In the afternoon we returned the visit of our Jewish friends; we had to traverse several empty spaces, formerly occupied by private dwellings and public bazaars, before we reached the abodes of our new acquaintances, which were situated at the outskirts of the

village. Their houses had a neat and comfortable appearance, and that assumed indigence and wretchedness, which their countrymen frequently display in order to avoid extortions and exactions, was not practised here, the people being evidently aware that the Jews had not much to lose, and the other had not much to hazard. Their principal occupation consists in writing fictitious charms and talismans for the Mahomedans, telling fortunes, and hawking about with a few articles of barter. Their community, which was formerly very considerable, has been diminished by persecutions, sickness, earthquakes, and other calamities; so that their number at present does not exceed one hundred souls. We visited the synagogue, a humble unadorned room, with no other furniture except a few mats and several pieces of worn-out carpets; the blind mullah, who was led by a boy, acted as guide, he assured us that within his recollection, Kanzeroon contained many Jews, and two synagogues, but, "Alas!" he ejaculated, "desolation and destruction are come upon us, and all our hope is now centred on the advent of Messiah our righteousness." We reminded him that Christ was the Lord, the true Saviour and Redeemer of Israel, and that unto them who looked for Him would he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. He made many earnest inquiries about our faith, and after some silent musings, said, with deep emotion, "I believe you are right." During the whole of the afternoon, Jews and Mahomedans thronged our lodging, to whom, without distinction, we proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ's Gospel.

Kanzeroon, with some plausibility, lays claim to great antiquity; many say it was destroyed by Alexander, and rebuilt by Shapur, the son of Ardeshir; at present, however, nothing of its former extent is traceable. The lapse of ages, and the numerous earthquakes which have so often devastated the south, have destroyed all the ancient remains, with the exception of a few mounds, supposed to be the vestiges of fire-temples, and a ruined fort, called Calaa-e-Tehud, probably, as its name implies, the former Ghetto of the Jews.

In the evening we proceeded again on our journey, we had now to ascend the Kottul-e-Dochter, a most difficult pass, where



our animals moved along with such dexterity, that nothing but a supernatural instinct seemed to guide them. Thanks to the charity of the benevolent merchant, who, in compassion to his mules, and the losses which he constantly sustained, raised a parapet on the most dangerous parts of the rocky path, and thus obviated much of the hazard and difficulty. On the summit of this lofty pass we encountered a most frightful tempest, all the elements of nature seemed engaged in one mighty conflict, hail and snow, in mingled confusion, came pouring down upon us, and made it difficult both to proceed and to stop. Our progress was very slow, as the wind with tremendous fury came sweeping down the mountains, and made our descent most perilous and fatiguing. We reached the valley of Abdui a little after midnight, and, being drenched to the skin, entreated our muleteers to halt for the rest of the night, but these hardy defiers of storm and tempest, with an unyielding obstinacy, prosecuted their march across the valley to the Kottul, which, from its singularly crooked windings, has acquired the appellation of *Pera Zan*, or old woman. How our animals accomplished this part of the journey, after the hard toils of the night, remains a wonder to me; many, it is true, fell under their burthens, and could only be brought on their legs again by the application of sticks and thongs. At day-dawn we came to a small caravanserai, on the middle of the pass; here we unloaded, and as the mountains are well covered with wood, we easily procured a donkey-load of fuel, took possession of one of the little cells, and, round a blazing flame in the midst of a suffocating smoke, fell into a sound sleep. At eight o'clock, P.M., we resumed our march over this rugged pass; the wind was blowing with such impetuosity that one of our lazy servants was twice thrown from his mule, fortunately he had a coarse felt covering around his body, or else he would have been a severe sufferer. Our ride, or rather walk, as the former was quite impracticable over this rocky region, continued for three miles, and then we descended into the extensive and fertile valley of Dustergan. This rich and productive plain, which, under a good and well-regulated government, might furnish abundance of grain and pasturage, is utterly neglected and desolate; and the few inhabitants which

are scattered over its wide surface, live in poverty and destitution, and frequently endure all the hardships of famine and starvation. We did not stop here, but continued our march to the next village. The clouds, which had been black and lowering, began gradually to discharge a few ominous drops, and before we had time to consult, whether it was best to return or to proceed, the rain poured down in torrents, accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning and the roaring peal of thunder. I inquired of my servant whether he knew the way to the munzil. "Yes," was his reply, "if I had the eyes of the Malek Azrail, (or angel of death,\*) I might be able to grope my way through the dense darkness in which we are enshrouded." "Then let us trust to God for guidance, for I certainly cannot travel with the caravan, it would be death to me to move so slowly over the marshy fields." "Bismillah, in the name of God," was the laconic reply; and in a few minutes we were in the van of the caravan. To get on with the jaded mules we were bestriding, was, however, no idle task, particularly as the whole country was deluged, and all traces of the path obliterated by the violent showers. We felt inclined to return again to the caravan; but this was impossible, as we could neither hear the sound of bells nor guess the track they were pursuing. Our perplexities and embarrassments increased by suddenly approaching a river, whose depth we could not guess, nor had we any means of ascertaining. I dismounted from my way-worn beast, took up some stones, threw them into the swollen stream, and finding from the sound that the bed of the river was not deep, we plunged into it, and with a little more water in our boots than before, reached the opposite bank. We scarcely knew where we were, when the noise of barking dogs distinctly rung in our ears, through the dreary whistlings of the wind and rain. We were now certain that we were in the vicinity of tents or houses, and the very thought of finding a shelter from the wet and chilling blasts, buoyed us up with fresh hope, and we urged our animals to a greater speed. The

\* The angel of death is, both by Jews and Mahomedans, supposed to be covered with eyes.

bellowing noise became nearer and nearer, till at last, by the grey clouds of the morning, our strained eyes could faintly distinguish the smoked stone walls of the caravanserai at Khone-Zeneyoon. The gates of this charitable shelter for the wayfarer were still shut when we arrived, and we had to exercise both our lungs and feet before the drowsy Dalantar could be roused; our servant was most impatient, and roared in a thundering strain, that he would break the doors, imprison the worthy keeper, and do a thousand other cruel acts if we were not instantly admitted. Unfortunately his authoritative threats were all drowned by the roaring wind, and never reached the ears for which they were intended. Our incessant knocking and beating, at length roused one of the lazy sleepers, and a hoarse voice exclaimed, "Who are you?" Again our servant, whose patience had been quite exhausted, regardless of our dislike to abuse, with a volley of obscene names, which only the Persian language can express, and a Persian tongue utter, met the inquiry; the gruff old keeper, frightened by such an official style, instantly opened and conducted us to his little cell, the best in the filthy abominable caravanserai. We immediately threw off our wet clothing, and without anything except our under garment laid down on the bare uneven floor, round a few glowing embers, which, with the addition of more fuel we fanned into a flame, and so, roasted on one side and frozen on the other, fell, into a drowsy, heavy, feverish sleep. I believe we should have slept till evening, had not the rain oozed through the dusty, smoked roof, and in a red slimy substance descended upon us. We might, in our wearied and exhausted condition, have borne a clean shower-bath, but this stagnant, blood-like mixture was quite insupportable. I went out to search for a better place, but who could cross a court at least four feet deep with filth, rotten bones, and decomposed carcasses of camels, and every other refuse; I crept back to our cell, sick with the sight, and the poisonous atmosphere I had been breathing. The miry stream in our temporary dwelling had now so increased, that we could no longer keep anything dry, or find a place where to sit or lie; and we were therefore obliged to remove to the stable, a journey which we could only perform on horse-

back, as no one on foot dared to move a step, without incurring the danger of sinking into heaps of filth and dirt. In our new abode we were not more comfortable, except that we had sufficient space to suspend our clothing, and to shift from place to place, to avoid the rain which dropped through every cleft of the broken roof.

Of all the unpleasant incidents attendant upon a winter journey in an uncivilized country, nothing can be compared to rain and wet; it is the aggregate of misery and wretchedness, particularly when one knows that the next halting-place is a deserted plain, or a ruined, thief-infested, caravanserai. No one who has not been subject to such exposures, can form an adequate idea of the mental and bodily distress which the solitary pilgrim endures in lands where art and civilization have not yet smoothed the difficulties and broken down the barriers which impede the intercourse between man and man, obstruct the progress of commerce, and hinder the advancement of light and knowledge. The pattering of the rain on the flat-terraced caravanserai continued, with little interruption, the whole day; all our articles of dress and bedding were perfectly drenched, and we looked forward to the cold, dreary, and long night, with dread and horror. In the evening the rain ceased, and, as we anticipated, a chilly frost set in; we had, fortunately, a good quantity of fuel, which we economically arranged to last till morning; and, spreading our carpets around the dim, glimmering flame, passed, between dozing and reading, a tolerable night. At five o'clock, A.M., we started; the ground was frozen and covered with a thick hoar frost; our poor beasts, however, were worn out and exhausted, and, in our damp and uncomfortable clothing, we suffered all the agonies which could be inflicted on a traveller in these inhospitable regions.

Our muleteer had assured us that we should pass some villages on the road where we might rest a little and eat our *nashetah*, or breakfast; but we traversed several rugged paths and rough hills, still the country looked deserted and desolate, without any traces of a human habitation. I could scarcely believe that we were approaching the capital of the south, the celebrated city of gardens and poets. I asked my muleteer how

many hours we still had to Sheeraz. "Two," was the brief reply. "And where is the village you mentioned this morning?" "Village! why, do you suppose that people will live in a district where both the governor and *illiyouts* can alternately plunder them at leisure?" It was useless to lecture him on the turpitude of falsehoods, for he averred, by the head of Ali, that the people of Fars, compared with those of Hamadan and Kushan, spoke the truth, and nothing but the truth. At two o'clock we approached Sheeraz; there was none of that animation and activity which generally indicates the proximity to a capital, and I found it very difficult to realize the fact that we were so near the city whose praises Hafez has sung, and every Persian re-echoes, till I actually saw the glazed minarets rising above the castellated walls, and the round towers which encircle the town.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### ARRIVAL AT THE CITY OF SHEERAZ.

THE *muezzins* were just calling to prayers when we passed the gates ; and, as their shrill voices vibrated on our ears, I was reminded of many towns in Europe, where the constant tolling of bells, and the processions of priests, would lead one to suppose that piety and devotion have subdued every unhallowed breath, whilst, in fact, the very reverse is the case ; so here, we had scarcely wended through a few narrow, filthy lanes, when we met numbers of idle, drunken vagabonds, parading the streets, and bawling forth the most obscene Bacchanalian songs.

We had a letter of introduction to the native British agent, Meerza Riza, who, like most native English employees in this country, was a concentration of everything that is bad and wicked. We did not feel much inclined to call on him ; but, as we could not, without his interference, get our luggage through the custom-house, we were obliged to repair to the house of this ill-famed official. As we anticipated, we found every inmate in his establishment exhilarated by the incebriating cup ; and the worthy agent himself was uttering such gibberish and incoherent sentences, that I sincerely regretted my acquaintance with him. We requested him to order one of his servants to assist us in searching for a lodging ; he made many objections to this proposal, and offered us his house, and all that it contained, for our use ; intimating at the same time that we should have plenty of amusement to beguile the tedious or wearisome hours we might have. We thanked him for his courtesy, and gave him to understand that we preferred a private dwelling, as it was more agreeable and convenient for us. " Yes, Dr. F. did the same, when one evening, with a little too much arrack in his head, he left this for his own lodgings ; finding the doors shut, he attempted to scale the walls, and met his

death." We had heard of the untimely and unhappy end of this Englishman, whose name I designedly forbear to mention ; but I was perfectly disgusted with the indifference and malignity with which an English agent related a circumstance, the very recollection of which ought to have made him blush.

It was already beginning to be dusk when we left the house of Meerza Riza, in quest of a temporary abode ; the air was cold and raw, and the streets dirty and impassable, so that it was no easy task for us to drag our wearied limbs through the labyrinth of an Eastern city. We went to a great many houses, but either the owners would not let them for a limited period, or asked such an exorbitant rent, that it was impossible to come to an agreement. We had already determined to go to a caravanserai, when our guide advised us to try our success in the Armenian quarter ; to these we proceeded, and by dint of entreaties and promises, succeeded in obtaining a comfortless, bleak, and empty room.

*January 13th.*—The gloom of the apartment corresponded with the melancholy and dreary aspect of the weather ; hail and snow, with now and then the accompaniment of an angry shower, continued without intermission. Many houses had fallen in during the night ; and the moaning and howling of the wind indicated that the work of devastation was not yet at an end. Our dwelling did not remain unscathed by the raging tempest, for several holes in the wall, which in summer served to admit air, and in winter, light—became greatly enlarged during the night, by the beating of the wind ; so that every blast made the wall tremble, and brought rain, snow, and broken bricks into our miserable abode. Still we felt grateful for having reached town, and for the humble shelter which, to some extent, excluded the violence of the warring elements.

Our greatest anxiety was to visit the Jews. We had already waited a long time, in anticipation that the storm would subside, but finding that the sky remained unchanged, and the sun invisible through the murky horizon, we wrapt our warmest clothing around us, and thus equipped, to the surprise of our landlord, started in search of the Jewish quarter. The streets are never particularly clean in any Persian town, but in rainy

weather they are most formidable; whole mountains of filth and dirt, accumulated in every corner, are swept away in the turgid torrent, which is formed by the heavy showers. The danger of creeping through such narrow, irregular, swamped thoroughfares, is aggravated by numerous holes, the receptacles of all that is disgusting and repulsive to the senses, and which abound in every city, notwithstanding the pretended abhorrence for material pollution. Careless, however, of all these obstructions, we paddled our way through dark, pestilential alleys and passages, to the desired quarter. There was a strong contrast between this and other parts of the town; the houses looked gloomy and decaying, the entrances narrow and low, and the doors were either of hard stone, or thick, strong wood, as if the owners of the miserable hovels were afraid that their wretched dwellings should be invaded by robbers, or other dangerous intruders. The streets, with the exception of a few lawless *zootees*,\* who were returning from their drunken orgies, and some miserably clad and shivering Israelites, who were hastening home, appeared quite deserted; and we almost doubted whether this was an inhabited locality. We inquired after the synagogue, but all Jews we met, out of fear or suspicion, answered evasively and passed on; a Jew who understood Hebrew, and guessed that we were not natives, pointed us to a low building, which he said was the synagogue. The house to which we were directed was, however, not the place of worship, and we had to crouch with our wet and heavy clothing, through several low, narrow, and dark passages, before we came to the court where the humble house of prayer (no doubt for security and safety) stood, in a retired and secluded corner. Here we found no one except an old Jew, with haggard, hollow features, trembling from head to foot in his ragged sheep-skin cloak; he returned our salaam with a servile sycophancy that furnished me at once with a vivid picture of the misery of the descendants of Abraham in this city. The aged Israelite,

\* The *zootees* are the most notorious ruffians and criminals in Persia; they are very numerous, and in many towns; and keep, often, both the governor and people in awe of their power.



at our request, ran to inform the mullahs that two strangers from the land of Edom\* were in the synagogue; and in an astonishingly short time, young and old, men and women, came running to see the wonders from the far west. The mullahs were extremely affable and polite, particularly Rabbi Isaac, the most learned and intelligent among them; he asked many pertinent and important questions, and seemed deeply interested in the object of our mission. We had a long discussion on the subject of Christianity; and before we left, addressed them alternately from the oratory, on the subject which had brought us amongst them. Whilst we spoke, there was not a sound to be heard in this large assemblage; every one listened with intense attention, as if they felt that life and death were pending on the words we uttered. At the conclusion of our discourse, the great questions of repentance and salvation through faith in the blood of the Lamb, were discussed with much solemnity and earnestness; and it was evident, from the half-smothered sighs of some, and the tear-bedewed eyes of others, that a serious and deep impression had been made on the minds of many.

On the following morning the storm ceased, and a bright, beautiful sun shed his warm and cheering rays into our damp and desolate room. We had a good many Jewish and Mahomedan visitors; amongst the latter was the treasurer of the governor,—a cunning, deceitful Persian, who was so liberal and profuse with his services, that his obsequiousness filled me with an irresistible repugnance, and made me loathe his society. He was accompanied by the British agent, a base, contemptible drunkard. The object of their visit was to get some brandy, but, unfortunately, when they had exhausted a whole volume of interested flatteries, and eulogized our piety, goodness and devotion, we could only repeat what we had already stated, that we carried no such beverage with us. They were greatly annoyed at this repeated refusal, and with the boldness and impudence of devoted debauchees, went to our boxes, opened

\* All rabbinical Jews, by a strange perversion of history, consider Christians to be descendants of Esau, the father of the Edomites.

the covers, and examined whether they contained the brutalizing liquor; they were keenly disappointed when they found that we had not deceived them, and with the most imperturbable non-chalance sat down again to discuss the reason of our disgust for this wretched propensity. Happily upwards of twenty Jews entered our room at this moment, or else this audacious conduct might have led to some severe animadversion. Our new visitors, with their sad and pensive looks, offered a strong contrast to the bold and artful treasurer, and the arrogant, bloated meerza, we begged them to sit down, but the presence of the two worthies made them timid and uneasy; unhappy people, to be thus condemned to fear and trembling, without any rational hope that under the sway of Islamism their position will ever improve. When our Mahomedan visitors were gone, the Jews seemed to breathe a different atmosphere, and their conversation, which had been flurried and constrained, became free and easy. They asked many questions about the doctrines of Christianity, which we endeavoured to answer. They were particularly struck to find, that the great and vital truths of the Gospel were all contained in Moses and the Prophets. Some of the mullahs urged the non-fulfilment of the many prophetic promises, as an argument against our belief in the Messiahship of our Lord; "If Jesus is indeed the Redeemer," they said, "and we cannot controvert your assertions, which are all founded on the inspired volume, then tell us why are the chains of our bondage still rivetted upon us, and why are the gates of our captivity still closed?" We referred them to those passages which point out the conditions of their deliverance, and the means of their emancipation; with deep emotions and agitated feelings they acquiesced in all we said, and I hope that in many hearts our words will have an abiding place, and produce the hallowed and glorious fruits of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The multitudes of Jews who daily crowded our house attracted the notice and curiosity of the Mahomedans, and the doctrines of our religion began to be the general topic of the day, even children in the streets pointed at us, and made their remarks on our avowed object. Many Mahomedans called upon us for New Testaments,

to whom we invariably explained the essential doctrines of our religion, and with few exceptions we were always listened to with the greatest patience and interest. Amongst others, we also formed the acquaintance of several illuminati, professed seekers after truth, they were very liberal and tolerant in their views, and spoke with reverence and respect of Christ and His followers; some had read the work entitled "The Balance of Truth," by the Rev. C. G. Pfander, a German missionary, and very much admired the spirit, tone, and style of this excellent controversial pamphlet. Our intercourse with these adherents of the Koran, has convinced me that an intelligent, pious, and prudent missionary might do incalculable good amongst the Mussulmans of Persia; his work would of course be entirely preparatory, and would frequently test his faith and patience. But I have not the least doubt, although many withered hopes and disappointed expectations may attend his efforts, yet, if he perseveres, the happy influence of social and religious intercourse will ultimately mitigate bigotry, soften prejudice, and remove many of the obstacles which at present impede the successful introduction of the Gospel into this sinful and polluted country. Hitherto very few attempts have been made to bring the Persians to a knowledge of the truth; an erroneous notion, that they are a difficult and inaccessible people, has closed the gates of compassion and benevolence against them, and led multitudes to neglect one of the most intelligent and influential Moslem tribes in Central Asia. It is true several pious and learned missionaries have felt a deep interest, and laboured with zeal and devotion for these long-degraded millions, but unfortunately their patrons and supporters proposed plans which it was impossible to adopt and impossible to carry into effect, the consequence was, that the missionaries were obliged to abandon a field where they had great encouragements to persevere. But while we lament the failures which attended the missions amongst the believers in the Koran, we are bound to inquire why was the tide of mercy not turned in favour of the Jews, who might have rewarded the husbandmen with an abundant crop, and proved the best channel to dispel with the torch of truth the long night of Moslem darkness, superstition, and

ignorance. From our own reception amongst them, in every part of that extensive land, I am quite convinced that the field is ripening for the harvest; and had I only enjoyed a nominal protection which the Protestant representatives of Great Britain always kindly extended to the unoffending missionary, the land of my prayers and trials would at present be my home, and the scene of my labours and usefulness.

Most of the Jews manifested great solicitude to know and understand the truth which we proclaimed. Sometimes we were obliged to place two Israelites as a kind of guard at our door, in order to prevent any accident or disturbance, as the multitude occasionally became very animated in their arguments, and in no measured terms, demanded of their mullahs, to tell them the reason, why they had not communicated to them such important knowledge, since they were paid for their work. The poor mullahs were quite paralyzed, when they heard such startling questions; and we had frequently to use persuasions, and entreaties, to smooth their ruffled tempers, and to calm their excited feelings. At the request of almost all, we continually visited the synagogues, and invariably met with a kind and cordial reception; the mullahs themselves, with the greatest urbanity, usually offered us seats on the oratory; and without any demonstration and bigotry, or hostility against our creed, allowed us for hours together to address publicly their respective congregations. Such sermons, excited many discussions among the Jews, and caused a great demand for Bibles and Gospels. Even the women, whose ignorance is most deplorable, manifested great interest in our message, and readily offered, in the absence of money, old coins, valueless ornaments, and even cooking utensils in barter for our books; a great spirit of inquiry was awakened in that celebrated town, where this miserable remnant of a forlorn race, have for so many ages been groaning under the iron yoke of Mahomedanism. What amount of good we effected, and how many we persuaded to be almost or altogether Christians, the day of judgment will alone disclose. Numbers of those who heard us, professed their conviction, and belief in the truth of Christianity; and though no one seceded openly from the synagogue, and avowed himself a

disciple of Jesus,—we must remember the extremities to which such a step would expose the convert, and what cruel punishment, either judicially, or that an infuriated mob might inflict upon a despised Jew, who has the temerity to prefer the Gospel of Christ, to the Koran of Mahomed.

The Sheerazees have always been considered the most accessible and liberal Persians; that narrow bigotry, fiery enthusiasm, and blind superstition, which characterizes the middle and lower classes of the Shee sect,\* is not exhibited; still there is the cruel, haughty, murderous, and revengeful spirit of the martial prophet; and many who abuse Mahomed, and deride his pretended revelation, will draw their daggers, and unsheath their swords, to force an inoffensive Jew to pay allegiance to the Arabian lawgiver. Many hundreds of Israelites, in order to save themselves from a violent death, constantly renounce the religion of their fathers. All the silk merchants in the bazaar Vekeel, the most extensive market, are proselytes; and their descendants, out of fear, strictly conform to all the rites of their new belief. I conversed with many of them; in the beginning they were very distant and reserved, but when we became more intimately acquainted, they laid aside this assumed restraint, and confessed their belief in Moses and the Prophets, and their contempt, and abhorrence for everything connected with their adopted creed.

Sheeraz, from historical facts and traditional records, was once inhabited by a great number of Jews; but the unsparing severity with which they have been treated, and the many dangers and persecutions to which they have been exposed, has only now left the remains of a once flourishing community, who by their industry and activity, very much contributed to the wealth and opulence of the place. The present population of Jews does not exceed four hundred families, who live in frightful misery and deplorable indigence; their dwellings are low, dirty, and confined, and in a moist climate would engender disease, and breed pestilence. Their domestic life differs little

\* The Sheeahs are Mahomedans of the sect of Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet, they have great contempt for the first three caliphs, Abonbeeker, Omar, and Othman, whom they regard as usurpers and supplanters of the rights of Ali, Mahomed's great champion.

from their neighbours ; early marriages, the terrible source of many evils, and the destroyer of all conjugal affections and responsibilities, are contracted by all parties as a meritorious act, and vice and crime, instead of being restrained by such untimely ties, luxuriate the more under the influence of laws and customs, which deprive woman of all liberty, and make her husband the guardian of her conduct and virtue. Such bonds stifle every better feeling, and prevent the development of all those tender and exalted affections, which the female heart is susceptible of, and also excludes her from everything that merits the name of education. In Bagdad, I have heard of two or three females who know how to read ; but in Persia, even such learning is unknown. The degradation of the one sex does not naturally argue well for the morality of the other, and I confess with reluctance, that, to a very great extent, the Jews merit that odium and contempt, under which they are held ; their occupations are generally mean and sordid,—hawking, telling fortunes, writing fictitious amulets, or what constitutes their staple support in Sheeraz, keeping secret taverns, called *Sherab-Khane*, where the most vile and intoxicating liquor is sold to the Persian debauchees ; these evils increase many of their calamities and ills, and make their position so precarious and insecure.

Sheeraz, like the generality of Eastern towns, has in winter a dreary and repulsive appearance ; and the traveller searches in vain for those beauties of nature and art, which the poets of yore have sung, and the present generation still delight to dilate on. In summer, however, the town, notwithstanding its ruined houses, and deserted streets, offers many attractions to an Asiatic, particularly its grapes, and other fruits, which are in profusion, and excellent. The gardens, too, are not devoid of those praises which have been lavished upon them, particularly, the Jehan Nouma, Chehel Toun, and Takht-e-Cudgar ; the latter, in July, 1847, when we visited Sheeraz a second time, had just been newly laid out and embellished, and the beauty, variety, and taste displayed in the adjustment of every tree, plant, and flower, quite exceeded our expectations. The palace, adjoining the garden, is situated on the declivity of a brown

rock, and ornamented in front by numerous flights of steps, which lead from terrace to terrace, all covered with flowers, which from their fulness and beauty, seemed only emulous to exhibit their loveliest hues, and to diffuse their most delightful fragrance. The angles of the castle are flanked with lofty round towers, open on all sides to admit the cool delicious breeze of the mountains, so grateful during the hot and sultry days of summer. Behind this noble pile, a silvery current, in soft murmurs, rolls down, over an undulating bed, into a broad bason facing the palace, and with its surplus fertilizes the extensive pleasure-grounds. From this large sheet of crystal water, diverge several avenues, shaded by lofty chinars, interwoven with the leafy branches of the vine, through whose arcades the prospect is bounded by groves of trees, bending under their luscious loads of peaches, apricots, nectarines, apples, pears, &c., &c. In our interview with the governor, we expressed our admiration of the fairy spot, which his liberality had created. "Yes," was his reply; "I have taken much trouble, and incurred great expense to bring it into this condition, but what use is it after all, since everything that passes in rapid succession from one hand to the other, cannot last or continue long." In the midst of these gardens, which have conferred on the Sheerazees, the character of a pleasure-loving people, are many monuments of saints and other celebrities,—as if these symbols of the dead were to check the excess and mirth of the living. Those which attracted our particular attention, were the tombs of the poets, Hafez and Saadi, whose writings have justly given to Sheeraz the appellation of the "Athens of Persia." The remains of Hafez are interred in a small enclosure, where several cypresses, in solemn majesty, wave their sombre branches. Around it are the graves of many other worthies; but that of the great lyric poet of Asia, is distinguished by a large block of Tabreez marble, covered with elegant inscriptions from his own writings. In a small building, close to it, are preserved with the utmost care the works of this Persian Anacreon. The person under whose charge they are, generally manifests great anxiety to acquaint the visitors with their future destiny, by unfolding

this highly-prized volume, and putting a mystical interpretation on whatever ode he happens to open. He was very assiduous in his attentions to us, and almost insisted upon acquainting us with our future career; but we peremptorily told him that we did not wish to anticipate whatever lay beyond the present, since we felt perfectly resigned to the will of Providence, and gladly submitted to everything he ordained for us. He did not at all admire our implicit faith in the decrees of heaven, and with much chagrin at our scepticism and incredulity, angrily removed the book. We next proceeded two miles further, to inspect the mausoleum of the deservedly admired Sheik Saadi, whose sublime and moral writings have so much contributed to the fame of the Persian muse. I had indeed anticipated, from the great veneration and enthusiasm of all Persians for their immortal bard, that some lofty monument, or costly shrine, would mark the spot where his ashes repose; but what was my astonishment, when a solitary neglected square structure, situated in the midst of a wild rocky amphitheatre, was pointed out as the object of our search. The entrance within was guarded by several dervishes, whose filthy appearance added greatly to the forlorn and desolate state of all around; they were quite pleased with our visit to the tomb of their patron saint, and overwhelmed us with a deafening chorus from the "Goulistan," or Bed of Roses. The body of the poet is deposited in a vaulted recess, and distinguished by a block of common marble; which, even in death, seems to perpetuate the trials and vicissitudes of his eventful history. We remained about an hour with the dervishes, who continued chanting some of the finest poems from the "Goulistan" and "Boustan;" and I confess, that although I had read these works with clever meerzas, I never thought their strains so mellifluous, and the language so elegant, as when I heard them on the grave of the author.

On our return, we deviated a little from the road to inspect a well, which, on account of its surprising depth, is considered one of the wonders with which the neighbourhood of Sheeraz abounds. It is situated among the ruins of a Seljukian fort,



and must have cost immense toil and expense ; the Sheerazees say that it is inhabited by genii, certainly not a very eligible or delectable place for these luxurious beings. In the town itself are very few edifices worthy of observation, and even those, which, compared with the rest of the houses, might lay a faint claim to beauty, are in a dilapidated and ruinous condition. In the time of Kerim Khan, who ruled Persia in the middle of the last century, under the title of Vekeel, or lieutenant of the reigning monarch, Sheeraz enjoyed unprecedented prosperity ; manufactories were established, the bazaars enlarged, trade flourished, and, to adopt the expressions of the natives, from every house, during the night, the strains of music sounded through the plain, and proclaimed in the ears of the monarch the happiness of his people. This unruffled calm was only of short duration, for with the death of Kerim, commenced a reign of anarchy and confusion, which distressed and endangered the whole country. The royal city became the arena of the most mortal combat and struggle ; several times it was besieged and taken, the seat of government removed, and the capital of Fars sunk into insignificance and neglect, from which I fear, under the existing state of things, it will never emerge. At present it contains about 30,000 inhabitants,\* who are all notorious for their laxity of morals, and fondness of wine and arrack ; their feelings, sentiments, and character, seem to reflect the spirit of their voluptuous poet, who preferred the juice of the grape, in the fragrant bowers of Moscella, to all the rivers of wine and scented pavilions of Mahomed's paradisc. The climate, which the natives describe as the most balmy and salubrious in the south of Irack, we found oppressive and sickly. In winter and spring the temperature is agreeable and pleasant, but in summer and autumn, when the plain is enveloped in fiery vapours, and the atmosphere becomes suffocating, fever, ague, and dysentery make their appearance, and as the people eat fruit to excess, these distempers generally degenerate into epidemics, and bring many to an unanticipated end.

\* The recent fearful earthquake has greatly diminished this number.

We remained in Sheeraz eighteen days ; during this period we formed the acquaintance of several respectable and influential Mahomedans, and nearly all the Jews ; many of the latter became seriously impressed with the truth, and solicitous about their souls' eternal welfare. We parted from them with sadness, and many, many times, since my first and last visit, have I supplicated a gracious God in behalf of these straying wanderers, the redemption of whose souls has always been precious in my sight.

## CHAPTER X.

### DEPARTURE FROM SHEERAZ.

ON the 29th we made arrangements for our departure ; the sky was cloudy and lowering, and the prospect before us dreary and dull ; our muleteer, however, prognosticated fair weather, and trusting to his experience, about mid-day we set out on our journey. Several Jewish and Mahomedan friends, with whom we had passed many happy, and I trust profitable, hours, came to bid us farewell. This mark of esteem to perfect strangers quite affected us, and I have ever since considered our reception in these strongholds of bigotry and delusion, as an indication that the days of Islamism are numbered, and that the time is not far distant, when the herald of the cross will take his stand on the very citadel of the prophet, and exclaim in the impassionate language of the evangelical prophet (Isaiah lv. 1), "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Near the gate we were surprised by a drizzling gentle rain, which soon penetrated our clothing, and made us feel exceedingly chilly ; it was a strange incident that both our arrival and departure should be under the gloomy aspect of a tempestuous sky, which forcibly reminded us of the words of the sublime seer (Isaiah lv. 10, 11): "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater : so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." A solemn declaration, which we trust will speedily be realized in this godless city.

Our path for several hours was winding in a sinuous course,

among hills and mountains, which had in some parts been soaked by the rain, and rendered our progress very difficult. At dark we reached Zergoon, situated at the foot of a barren rock, and alighted, and took up our abode in a private house, where we received every attention that the anticipation of a *baksheesh* could elicit. We did not enjoy the hospitality of our host long, for at three o'clock in the morning we again set forward on our journey.

The road, which even in summer is bad, had not improved under the softening influence of the rain; and till day-dawn we were obliged to wade through a swampy and flooded plain, which quite exhausted the mules, and made them steam with perspiration on a cold winter morning. At sunrise we came to the Kour, the Araxes of the South, and known in Persia under the appellation of Buad-Emir. It is celebrated by the glowing pen of the Irish poet\* for its "bowers of roses," and "sweet songs of the nightingale;" but, unhappily, the days when odoriferous flowers and cool arbours lined the banks of this classic stream have passed, and the eye wanders for many miles over a shadeless, deserted, and uncultivated country,—a melancholy proof of the wretched and miserable condition of the people. We crossed the river, over a broken, dilapidated bridge, which had so many chasms, that without dismounting we could not pass it; a small ascent brought us to the wide and extensive plain of Istakhar, or Merdasht, once enlivened by the glittering, costly arms of the Medes and Parthians, and the proud helmets of the invincible Macedonians; but now, deserted and abandoned, the abode of wandering *illiyouts*, and a few wretched, half-starved villagers.

The ruins of Persepolis, which appeared, at the extremity of the plain, as if they were rising out of the bowels of the grey rugged rocks, at whose sloping base they are situated, even at a distance of ten miles looked grand and imposing, rolling back the mind on the stream of time to centuries long since past, and to ages whose history is enveloped in darkness and uncertainty. The Persian authors ascribe the foundation of this noble edifice to Djemsheed,

\* Moore.

the fourth monarch of the Paishdadian dynasty, and famous for his great genius and inventive spirit. His eventful history has been immortalized by the sublime Ferdosi, who has invested it with all the charm and romance of the gorgeous East. But, in whatever hallucinations the glowing fancy of Eastern writers, who are fond of the marvellous, may indulge, this beautiful pile is certainly one of the most magnificent relics of antiquity; and, in glancing over the vast and splendid ruins, one hears, as it were, the voice of the dead, speaking out of these abased masses of grandeur, which, in their fallen condition, invite the contemplator to cultivate that better part, which will outlive the wreck of nature and the crush of worlds.

On approaching from the plain, as we did, with the slanting beams of a winter sun shining on the frowning ruins, where one of the greatest monarchs the world ever knew once held his court; and another, no less celebrated, indulged in his delirious and giddy bacchanals; the place, even in its present desolate condition, has an imposing and bewildering appearance, and confirms the fame which Scripture and ancient history have deservedly conferred on the greatest and wisest monarch of antiquity. This pleasing melancholy is not diminished after ascending the double flight of steps which conduct to the landing place, for here, again, the numerous marble halls, and the countless bass-relief sculptures, excite the feelings, and make one linger with delight on a spot where every image reminds us of generations long since forgotten, and of heroes whose names only live on the page of history. The platform, which is raised fifty feet from the plain, occupies an area of about fifteen thousand feet long, and nine hundred broad; it is ascended by a double marble staircase, the steps of which are so low and gentle, that without any difficulty the best Arab horse will ride up and down with ease. On reaching the landing place, two colossal bulls, whose heads, no doubt, fell under the scimitars of the ruthless Saracens, form the portals;—fit emblems to guard the sacred precincts of the palace of the great king. A second portal, watched by similar sentinels, with the exception that they have human heads and gigantic wings, conducts into a spacious court, where a cistern, once replenished by subter-

aneous aqueducts, diffused coolness, and now only increases the yearning of the feverish lips for the refreshing draught. This court leads to a second terrace, where the majestic grandeur of this smitten elegance is most conspicuous; whole colonnades of magnificent columns lie hidden under their own mouldered remains; others, half concealed from sight, disclose the finest workmanship of the Grecian and Egyptian chisel; and the few still standing, mockingly display the wonder, beauty, and splendour of this scene. From these pillars, which, in sad grandeur, stand conspicuous amongst their fallen companions, awaiting the same withering stroke, the eye wanders over countless hieroglyphic representations, which adorn the staircase, and ornament all the walls, till the mind is exhausted and fatigued with the vast variety of this mighty mansion, which has defied the rude assaults of numerous hostile armies, and still continues, even in its present desolation, an object of wonder and admiration. Immediately behind the ruins of this gorgeous palace, are two sepulchral vaults, cut in the solid rock, and elaborately sculptured in the front; the most conspicuous personage being the Archemagus, or high-priest, with his hands extended towards a blazing altar, and the symbol of the guardian spirit hovering over the intervening space. These sepulchral grotts, concealed under lofty perpendicular cliffs, as if to outlive the decay of worlds, even these have not remained unscathed by the lapse of time and the ferocity of man; the lower part of one is entirely covered by the accumulation of rubbish, and the debris of the mouldering rock; and the other has been forcibly broken open and abused, for the vile purpose of a stable, by the rude and uncivilized migratory tribes of Fars, who encamp near this former abode of royalty, during the winter season. We remained a whole day amongst these interesting objects of attraction; and then, through the dark, untenanted, marble courts (where many hundreds of sculptured figures, which only want life to relate the wonderful tales which have transpired in these ruined, mutilated, and silent halls), we retraced our steps to the principal staircase, and returned to our munzil, at Futenbad.

We contemplated leaving on Monday, but owing to heavy

rains, and the laziness of our muleteer, who wanted to enjoy a few days' rest in his own home, our stay was protracted till Thursday. We did not, however, suffer any *ennui*, for both the *ketkhoda*, two mullahs, and the rest of the villagers, by routine, worried us with their company, as if they were determined to convince us that in volubility and loquaciousness, the Futeabodics were exceeded by none of their countrymen. The worthy chief of the village, who had read in some book about the *Takht-e-Djemsheed*, entertained us with many stories about its origin, and the legion of *deeves* and *genii* whom King Solomon despatched to be the architects and stonemasons. Amongst other things, he mentioned a talisman with the seal of the wise king of Israel upon it; on this precious relic, he assured us, depended the fortune and welfare of Iran; but some inauspicious bird revealed this hidden treasure to the Franghees, who had it removed; and thus ended, for ever, the prosperity and happiness of the empire. The worthy chief, when he related this, was quite affected by his own story, and in a sad mood counted his beads, till the village mullah who was sitting next, reminded him that the magic stone by right belonged to the Gaours, since *Djemsheed* and all his successors, till Mahomed, had formed part of this race of irreclaimable infidels.

One afternoon our wise friend accompanied us to the *Nakshee-Roustam*, about three miles north of *Persepolis*, a place famous for its tombs, in which many a crowned and kingly head has lain for ages, unconscious of the misery, wretchedness, and poverty, in which their once mighty and glorious empire has sunk. The mountain in which these celebrated and singular grotts have been hollowed, is about one thousand feet high, and quite perpendicular. The tombs, four in number, differ very little from those at the *Takht*. The cuneiform inscriptions, which are very copious, have, by the action of the sun and rain, become much impaired, though scores of lines are in excellent preservation, and no doubt contain an account of these immovable and solid monuments of the dead, which have witnessed the rise and desolation of the most splendid and magnificent city of *Cyrus's* extensive empire.

Beneath these royal tombs, near the base of the rock, are

several sculptures in relief, which are far inferior to those at the Takht, and must have been chiselled at a period when the arts and sciences, which the Kaianian rulers had transplanted with their conquests from Greece and Egypt, had degenerated, and assumed a vulgar and less refined taste. They are supposed to commemorate the exploits of the Sassanian monarchs, particularly Baharam Gaour, who is considered by all Persian writers the personification of virtue, valour, generosity, and every other grace that can adorn the character of an Eastern potentate. In front, and at a short distance from these giant tombs, which have concealed for ages, from human gaze, the sacred ashes of the greatest rulers of the ancient world,—is a square chamber, raised about three yards from the ground, and constructed of large blocks of white marble. The roof is covered with two immense slabs, and the interior bears evident marks of fire: there can scarcely be a doubt that it was a *sanctum sanctorum*, to preserve the sacred fire of the magi from becoming extinguished. Such sanctuaries the Mythratie religion indispensably required before the reformation introduced by the second Zoroaster, under Darius Hystaspes, when the rites of the magi were performed on lofty summits, and under the azure vault of heaven, where rain or wind might extinguish the symbolic emblem.

Our worthy friend, the ketkhoda, pretended to possess a thorough knowledge of every locality in these classic regions; he pointed out to us all the places of note in Djemsheed's household, with a certainty and conviction that made it quite impossible to combat his arguments. We listened devoutly to all he said, and our seeming assent to his assertions so flattered his vanity, that he swore, by the head of Imam Ali, that we must be his guests in the evening. Two hours before sunset, we quitted these secluded and solitary rocky sepulchres, and along numerous canals, which intersect the fertile plain of Maidesht, threaded our way back to our uninviting lodgings, in Futenbad. Our friend, the ketkhoda, by deviating a little from the path, adroitly deserted us, not in order to surprise us with a good dinner, but to avoid the dilemma of being reminded of his promise. About eight o'clock in the evening, he again



favoured us with his presence, and, in a most bombastic strain, inquired why we had offended our pledged friend, in not eating with him. We cut short his cunning speech, by reminding him that it was still very early, and that our dinner had been sparing enough to make a second course quite acceptable. This put the crafty Persian to his wit's end, and he was happy to get away without the present which he imagined his bland and soft speech would extort from us. On the 5th we quitted this miserable village, and its obtrusive inhabitants. Nearly a week we had been detained among them, and, in our converse and intercourse, had many opportunities of discovering all the odious and malignant passions which characterize the hearts of the Persian peasantry. Indolence, rapacity, bigotry, and fanaticism, imbecility of mind, and viciousness of feeling, all centre in them, without one redeeming quality; the fields which they cultivate, the rain which fertilizes them, and the mild influence of the sun which ripens the harvest to perfection, have no salutary or softening influence upon them. Their thoughts and minds are either occupied with inventing schemes to elude the exactions of the governor; or, if their means allow, with the unsatiable desire of gratifying their gluttonous, and other debasing appetites. Labour, which, even under a government like the Persian, becomes enfranchised, and adequately rewards the tiller for his toil, is, under the plea of oppression, utterly neglected; and the richest and most productive soil, which once supported teeming multitudes, is covered with weeds and overgrown with rank grass.

We parted in no very friendly terms with the owner of our lodging, whose cupidity we found it difficult to blunt; we paid him half a krone per diem, about sixpence, this he insisted was such a paltry trifle that a beggar would be ashamed to offer it. As we knew this was a handsome rent, we resolutely refused to give more, and he with the same determination averred that he gave us the whole as a *baksheesh*. He did not imagine that we would take him at his word, for the place was only a ruin; but when he saw us equipped in our travelling appendages, he changed tone, and with an abject servility begged a gratuity worthy of Frangheesh generosity; we gave him the same amount

as before, which he accepted with great delight. Most of the Persians think that every European possesses the secret of alchemy, and can command gold at will: they have seen some ambassadors, and Indian officers, who lavish money with great prodigality, and consequently every European is an Englishman, and every Englishman an Elchee. The sun was already high above the horizon when we began our journey, but the air being fresh and bracing, our ride over the plain, along the winding course of the Kur, was quite exhilarating. Towards noon we came to Seevund, a large village at the declivity of a noted rock, which in winter shelters from the shivering blasts, but in summer becomes so heated that it drives all the inhabitants to the valley, where the Palwar, a tributary to the Kur, supplies them with water, and the fertile soil with excellent pasture. The natives of Seevund are Parsees, who embraced, a few centuries ago, Mahomedanism; they retain many of their former habits and customs, particularly the women, whose head-dress is a red flat cap, the distinctive mark of their former sect. We lodged in the house of one of these unfaithful descendants of Zoroaster's creed, but did not experience any of the hospitality which the orthodox adherents of the magian religion extended to me whenever I came in contact with them. The compartment assigned to us for our accommodation was a stable, which goats and sheep, the greater part of the evening, disputed with us, and only by exerting our prerogative as strangers, did we succeed in keeping these obstinate combatants at bay. Towards midnight, when our quadruped companions desisted from their aggressions upon our premises, we wrapt ourselves in coverlets, and as the place was warm, anticipated a comfortable rest; this luxury, however, we only enjoyed a very short hour, for the rain, which had been pouring down the whole evening, descended in torrents after midnight, and in a very short time saturated the mud plaistered roof and forced a passage into our comfortless abode. We exchanged and re-exchanged places with our philosophical companions, who defied rain, wind, and cold, with stoical indifference; but even this did not avail, for the stream pursued us across the whole place, and at last filled it with a large turbid pool, which compelled us to take refuge upon the

pile of boxes containing our books. The rain abated with day-dawn, but the whole village had a miserable appearance, the streets were all impassable, some houses had fallen in, others the peasants, in their wet and dirty clothing, were propping up. We left our abode in charge of a servant, and went in search of a retired place, where we spread our wet clothes to the rays of the sun, and enjoyed the beautiful sight of a cataract which during the night had formed itself on the top of the rock, and with a roaring sound descended from its perpendicular height into the deluged streets of the village. As it would have been quite unavoidable to entreat our muleteer to leave, we endeavoured to procure a more habitable lodging for the next night. Our host swore by the life of the prophet that we had the best stable in the place, but as his mere assertion did not satisfy us, we began to make enquiries among the idle multitude who took pleasure in gazing at us. This terrified our landlord who calculated upon fleecing us at leisure, and he vacated a better and cleaner place for our occupation. In the evening the village mullah paid us a visit; he went through the whole catechism of Persian complimentary enquiries, which, as etiquette required, we returned with usury. The wise man of the village was particularly interested in the contents of our boxes, and on being informed that they contained Torahs and Angeels, he became anxious to see the books of which he had both heard and read many things. We showed him the Psalms and Gospels, but the strong and beautiful binding absorbed all his thoughts, and from the most serious topic he would suddenly turn to me with the query, "Is this really not hog's leather, and is there nothing *charam* (unlawful) in the printing or binding?" Being satisfied that every thing was right, he began to read first to himself in a low humming tone, but as he became more interested, his voice gradually swelled into a loud chant, which brought a good number of visitors to our lodging; they all listened for the first time to the sacred truths of the Gospel with intense attention, and expressed, by most unqualified nods and other signs, their admiration and wonder. The mullah had a great desire to purchase a copy, and after much secret whispering with a part of his flock, he offered a khroné and a half,

for which we gave him the Gospel, and I have no doubt that it has been frequently read and pondered over by these ignorant devotees of Mahomed.

On the ninth we started, our host, as usual, was not quite satisfied with our liberality, but as we were mullahs and not elchees, he consoled himself with the pleasing anticipation of making other travellers at some future day pay for our niggardliness. When we were mounting, the mullah came to bid us farewell, and, as a mark of esteem, requested us to favour him with our names; he advised us to engage two or three peasants to assist in crossing the Palwar, as the rains and thawing snow had very much increased the depth of the river; we obeyed our new friend's hint, and by so doing saved both time, and, I believe, two mules. Several muleteers, who smiled at our precaution, had to pay for their carelessness by the loss of many valuable parcels, containing silks, shawls, &c., which made them shreik, lament, and beat their breasts, like real madmen. On the other side of the river some time was consumed in adjusting the loads, and then we proceeded along a pleasant valley, which, even at this early season, was enlivened by a soft verdure, presenting a strong and pleasing contrast with the naked rocky cliffs which bounded it on both sides. The whole country appeared fertile and inviting, but there were no traces of culture, nor had the plough for many years broken the stubborn glebe. We encamped in the open fields, under a warm sunny sky, near Kemin, a poor village, where we suffered greatly from the heat by day, and the hoar frost by night. At one o'clock we were again mounted; our path, as on the day previous, continued along the valley, which became rugged and narrow as we advanced, till we found ourselves enclosed between two abrupt mountain chains, without any path to find egress from the rocky labyrinth. From the serious countenance of the muleteer, and the cries to go in a single file, I anticipated a toilsome passage through the rapid rolling *Sevand Rud Khoneh*; but instead of this we entered the side of a rocky promontory, through which a broad path with great labour and ingenuity had been cut. On emerging out of this indestructible adamantine passage, for which the natives praise the mother of Solomon, we ascended

into the fertile plain of Moorghaub, the ancient Pasargadæ, the trophy of Cyrus' victory, and the tomb of his mortal remains. There is nothing of magnificence or beauty surviving the devastation of this city; the hand of man and the unsparing encroachments of time have almost obliterated all the traces of its former existence. Three pilastres with cuneiform inscriptions, a pillar, and a few marble fragments, scattered over the plain, constitute the vestiges of the celebrated seat of the magi. The only building which traditionary sanctity has preserved from destruction, is the tomb of Cyrus; a splendid and substantial mausoleum, called by the natives *Meshed-i-Madre-e-Solyman*, the tomb of the mother of Solomon; it stands in a wide square area, surrounded by irregular columns, which the coarse taste of the natives has connected by a rude mud-wall. From the distance it has all the appearance of a shrine dedicated to some Mahomedan saint, which like many others meet the traveller's eye everywhere in Persia; but, on approaching nearer, the beauty of the materials and solidity of its construction show that it belongs to an era antecedent to the invasion of the barbarous tribes of the desert. The tomb rests on a pedestal of white blocks of marble, which rise in a pyramidal shape, and give it a grand and imposing appearance.

Arrian, upon the testimony of Aristobulus, says, that the royal paradise of Pasargadæ was surrounded by groves of various trees, and a house for the magi, a melancholy contrast with its present desolate and forlorn aspect.

Near this costly sepulchre, is a straggling village, which bears the name of *Madre-e-Solyman*; the inhabitants are all poor and wretched, and their cupidity and rapacity is so strong that we had to keep close watch near our luggage, for fear of affording them an opportunity of exercising their wicked inclinations.

Our muleteer wanted to unload in the village; but, after a search from hut to hut, we all thought it better to encamp on the plain, than in the vermin-covered hovels of the natives. In the day-time the air was pleasant and warm, but by night the penetrating frost made us shiver and tremble in every limb. I sought refuge in a ruined caravanserai, which some have conjectured to be the identical dwelling of the magi,—the guardians

of Cyrus' tomb; but the shape, form, and arrangement of the whole structure disprove the supposition that the travellers' cheerless cells were ever the abode of the wise men of the East. I certainly did not feel comfortable within these gloomy retreats, through which the wind poured with a sighing melancholy, and whatever its glory may have been of yore, I forgot all, and hurried away as if the ghost of Zoroaster himself was pursuing my very steps. In our encampment I found all quiet and still, with the exception of three muleteers, who lay on the outskirts, bellowing with all their might, to prevent any nocturnal surprise. I enveloped myself in a coverlet, and, with my eyes peeping out, watched the countless host of bright stars, which for the last twenty-four centuries have witnessed the various vicissitudes which have befallen this country. An hour after midnight we moved again; the atmosphere was bitingly piercing, and the hoar frost covered us and everything else with the venerable appearance of old age. The road continued even and level for an hour, and then it became rugged and difficult; the intensity of the cold also increased, and we felt altogether miserable. At day-dawn we perceived that we had entirely left the plain country and were hemmed in between hills and rocks, almost covered to the summit with a dazzling winding sheet, without knowing where or how to proceed. The muleteers pointed to a narrow defile, but this was filled with deadly drifts, which threatened destruction to any one who ventured to touch their treacherous unbeaten and untrodden heights. We retraced our steps for almost two miles, and then on a snail's pace threaded our way along the foot of the hills, where the wind had driven away the snow, or previous caravans had left a devious track. To ride was quite impossible, as the path was too dangerous and slippery, and the muleteers with their floundering quadrupeds were too busy to pay any attention to the scrambling bipeds. Our difficulties were aggravated by several unseen latent streams, which were flowing under tunnels of ice and snow, and could only be distinguished from the blended confusion of nature, by their hollow and deep murmurings, when rolling over a hidden piece of rock, which had separated itself from the parent stem. We found numerous carcases of horses, mules and

donkeys, which the owners must have abandoned in despair when exhausted from incessant exertion and toil; or at the approach of a snow shower, which in these regions, where there are neither roads, villages or caravanserais to seek refuge in, invariably proves fatal to those who are overtaken by it. The remains of former caravans did not cheer us in our onward progress, and the servants were particularly discontented, and in the most plaintive strain lamented their cruel fate in having quitted the sunny city of Bagdad. Providentially we had a serene sky and a bright shining sun, otherwise we might all have been lost in the perilous drifts which make this road in winter, as it is marked in most maps, quite impassable.

Before noon we descended through a deep ravine into an extensive undulating plain, where we were gratified with the delightful sight of the caravanserais, Khona Kohra, our halting place for the day. Frequently in performing a long and wearisome march, overcome with exhaustion and fatigue, I strained my eyes to obtain a glimpse of the village, or caravanserais, where the toils for the next few hours would be interrupted by a grateful rest; but this sensation was always enhanced when the munzil had been laborious and toilsome, and the dangers and difficulties overwhelming. O how did I long to reach the way-farer's home, and to repose within its black and sullied cells; and when at last the gloomy walls burst upon my view, with what energy did I push on the drudging beast to reach the longed-for spot. These emotions I experienced at beholding our asylum for the day, rising conspicuously out of an illimitable dreary waste of snow; my delight was inexpressible, and with intense fervour I raised my heart in gratitude to Him, "who giveth snow like wool, and scattereth his ice like morsels," and who heareth his servants and delivereth them out of all their troubles. At the caravanserais all was pitiless misery and frightful discomfort; the court was filled with heaps of snow and pools of stagnant water; the stables with filth and skeletons of quadrupeds, which the vultures had gnawed; even the recesses had been turned into receptacles for all sorts of foul and putrid matter, too disgusting to detail; and to complete the picture of wretchedness, there was not a soul, far or near, from whom we could obtain provision, or

even a little fuel to make a cup of tea. But man's extremity is God's opportunity ; for, when hungry and tired we sat down in the gateway, gazing with despondency on the dazzling wintry world, we were accosted by a respectable Armenian from Ispahan, who with a numerous retinue was on his way to Bushire and Batavia. He immediately invited us to his cell, which had been thoroughly cleaned, ordered an excellent breakfast of tea, bread, fruit, and cold meat for us ; and in fact did everything to make us forget the toils and hardships of our journey. In the evening we parted from our hospitable friend, to pursue our respective destinations ; we had only been together a few hours, yet his generous and kind deportment had tenderly affected us, and with much unwillingness and many blessings we parted from this good Samaritan.

Our next stage was Soormuk, a poor village enclosed within mud walls and surrounded by extensive ruins, an ocular demonstration of the awful extortion and merciless tyranny of the governors of the district. During the day we had numerous applications for medicine, and many who had only imaginary diseases, requested us to feel their pulses and prescribe the necessary remedy. Bread-pills might have done wonders amongst these importuning patients, who insisted that they were ill, and we were able to cure them. In order, however, to satisfy their anxious and craving solicitude for our advice, we recommended to the majority, hard work, frugal diet, and seven hours' sleep ; a prescription which drove them all away, and permitted us to enjoy a needful repose. The following day, at Abada, the people presented quite a different phasis to their countrymen in the last village ; they were lively and volatile, boasted of their laxity of morals, love for wine, and indifference to the prophet and his laws. The *ketkhoda* and some mullahs had religious discussions with us ; they admired all we said, and wished the religion of the Gospel universal success, for the plausible reason that wine, arrack, pork, &c., would then be *khatal*, and nothing whatsoever *charam*. Our pleasure-loving intruders engaged us the greater part of the evening, and as we started again at one in the night our rest was very short ; happily the road was easy and good, and by alternately riding and walking, we mastered



the overwhelming influence of sleep, and reached, wretched and weary, the village of Shulgistan. At eleven at night, just when the boisterous noise in the caravan had subsided, and sleep was about to seal my eyes, the coarse voice of our muleteer announced to us the agonizing tidings that most of the mules were already loaded. We all rose with the greatest reluctance, and resumed our journey under the most drowsy and painful sensations. We were now approaching the hills which form the boundary line between Parthia and Media, the present Fars Irak Ajem, which, united under Cyrus, was known under the appellation of Persia. The country in no respect differed from that which we had been traversing for the last week—naked, uncultivated valleys, ruined towns and half deserted villages, diversified the scenery, and illustrated the sad cause of Iran's misery and depopulation.

Our wearisome night journey terminated at ten, A.M., at the village Aminabad, where we found a hospitable shelter in a decaying caravanserai. In the afternoon, half-a-dozen of *rahdars* came to our cell, to extort an impost upon our luggage. We were convinced of the injustice of their demand, and so, with sullen indifference, resisted their claim. The chief of the party, tired with his unsatisfactory negotiation, became quite violent and intemperate, and invoked the most awful imprecations on himself, if he allowed us to leave. We listened to all his threats and menaces, with the greatest unconcern, which made every vein in his face throb and swell with fury; however, when this ebullition of savage rage had cooled down, he returned to our lodging, and in a subdued tone of voice, said, "I will not insist upon the impost, but you must give me a bottle of arrack, to make some *keif* (pleasure) on your account. We told him that we carried no such beverage with us, and even if we had any, would not be accessory to his breaking the prophet's law. The disappointed rahdar swore by Ali, and all the 124,000 Mahomedan prophets, that sherab and arrack were only interdicted to those who prayed; but, as he never prayed, he could not be included in the law. His philosophy and logic proved of no avail, and the worthy tax-gatherer left with contempt the niggardly, unsocial, and temperate Franks.

At midnight we set out again; the air was cold, and the wind,

sweeping from the north over the sterile wastes, cut my face like a sharp knife. I was reeling to and fro in my saddle, writhing with agony, and scarcely able to hold the bridle of my horse with my stiffened fingers. I attempted to walk, in order to keep up the vital heat, but my feet had lost all sensibility, so that I could not move a step. Towards dawn the chill blasts became more vigorous, and the baffling frost increased in severity; we all expected the loss of some limb, and with chattering teeth dilated on the best remedies in such a contingency; but "He who holdeth the winds in his fist, and the waters in the hollow of his hand," heard our prayers through the raging elements, and without any personal injury, except swollen faces and hands, we reached Komesha at eleven, A.M.

That this place was once a flourishing and populous city, its ruined towers, dilapidated walls, and mouldering heaps of houses and shops amply testify. Near the town is the shrine of an Imam Zadeh, called Shah Reza, whose vicinity for a long time exempted the people from all legal taxes; within the last score of years, the sacred remains of this saint have lost their influence, and the haughty, idle, and unprincipled inhabitants (who, like those of all holy places in the East, excel in all kinds of immorality) became a prey to rapacious and avaricious governors. When we were there, Meerza Daood, a nephew of the Mehtummed-ad-Doulah, Governor of Ispahan, had the control of it, and with all the tender mercies of an Armenian, he maltreated the bigoted followers of the Arabian prophet. Every year, ten thousand *tomauns*, about five thousand pounds, were forcibly wrung from the impoverished and starved people, for the coffers of the rich Georgian, besides an almost equal sum which went into the pockets of the collectors, *ketkhodas*, or other officials. Many of the people came to us, as in many other places, with sad tales of cruelty and oppression, and endeavoured to enlist the sympathy of strangers and unbelievers in their behalf.

On the 18th we came to Mayar, an extensive village, embowered in the midst of orchards and trees, which, in summer, when covered with leaves and fruits, must be a grateful sight to the traveller, who, hour after hour, sees nothing but ab-

rupt sterile mountains, extensive deserted villages, and isolated crowded cemeteries. We alighted in a beautiful caravanserai, built by the benevolent mother of Shah Abbas, who, by this and many similar charitable edifices, has immortalized her name. In the evening, at seven o'clock, in order to reach Ispahan by sun-rise, we entered upon our last stage. The very idea of having to toil only a few hours more, gave elasticity to our frames, and courage to our hearts. The road was bad in the extreme, and in crossing a pass called Kottul Ourtcheene, we lamed several fatigued and worn-out mules, which detained us about an hour. This time we profitably employed in preparing a good cup of tea, which infused warmth into our frozen frames, and dispelled sleep from our drowsy and closing eyes.

With the approach of day our path improved, and several well-built reservoirs, filled with good water, indicated the vicinity of the celebrated capital of the Seffervean monarchs. At eight o'clock we crossed the last range of hills, and then, as by enchantment, beheld the largest city of Persia, bathed in the golden glow of the morning, spread out with its numberless domes, minarets, palaces, and gardens, almost beyond the limits of our vision.

The imposing aspect which had delighted us at the distance, did not, as is generally the case with Eastern towns, diminish at a nearer view. Everything around us displayed magnificence and elegance, luxury and delight; palaces, gardens, mosques, diversified by thick groves and shady avenues, breathing the soft voluptuousness of the luxurious East, and the epicurean taste of the Ispahances, stood in sad beauty, forsaken and neglected, in the once populous and royal suburb of Saatatabad, and part of the Chchar-Baugh, through which our muleteers conducted us. Near the town, we were met by a custom-house officer, who took our luggage to the *Goomrock*, but permitted us pass on to the Armenian suburb—Julfa—where we alighted at the house of Petros Stephen, the British agent. In the afternoon, the servants came with our baggage. The custom-house officers had minutely examined every article, particularly our European wearing apparel and linen, on which they had unsparingly printed the marks of close and curious inspection.

A heavy and exorbitant impost was charged on our books, but Daood Khan, an Armeno-Protestant, and physician of the governor, interposed and frustrated the artful design of these minions of the *Goomrockchee* upon the extent of our purses. By night we left the house of our respected friend, Howagee Petros, and proceeded to a lodging which an Armenian had procured for us. The house was large and comfortable, and, like most of the dwellings in their quarter (which have survived the political storms and fanatical tempests of the Moslems), the spacious hall which was assigned for our accommodation, had once reverberated with gayer sounds than those produced by the cumbrous lumber and heavy boxes of travellers.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### TOLERATION OF CHRISTIANITY BY ABBAS.

THE suburb of Julfa owes its origin to the wise and liberal policy of Shah Abbas; this monarch, following the example of those rulers who once controlled the destinies of the East, instead of making slaves of an industrious and commercial people, transplanted them from their native soil in Armenia, to his own capital in Persia, and gave them a fertile and beautiful quarter on the southern side of the Zeinderood. The politic monarch favoured them with his special protection and countenance, granted them liberty to build churches, to practise the rites of their faith, and personally encouraged them in their commercial and enterprising speculations. This new colony, under such favorable auspices, rapidly increased in importance and wealth, and the fanatical indolent Mussulman beheld with surprise, envy and smothered indignation, the prosperity of the unbelieving Gaour. The energy and activity of the colonists, however, infused a new life into the metropolis, and the capital of Iran, soon became the most populous, thriving and influential city in the East. Caravans laden with silks, crowded the roads to the Euxine and Persian sea; whilst distant and remote nations sent ambassadors to court the favour, and make commercial treaties with the ruler of Persia.

With the death of Abbas the Great, the Armenians lost their best friend and protector; his successors alternately favoured and oppressed them, still they continued faithful to the descendants of their benefactor, and attached to the royal family; but a dark cloud was gathering over their horizon, and a fearful fate impending over this rich and industrious colony. Mahmoud, the leader of the Affghans, during the reign of the imbecile and effeminate Shah Hossein, besieged Ispahan with his barbarous mountaineers. The Armenians bravely defended their suburb,

and all that was near and dear to them, and would in all probability have saved the king and his capital, had the weak monarch entrusted himself to these enterprising and loyal subjects. The advice of treacherous counsellors and evil ministers however prevailed, and with closed eyes the monarch rushed to his own fatal doom; his brave and liege Christian subjects were disarmed, and their flourishing and rich quarter abandoned to the unbridled fury of incensed and licentious savages. The horrors which they endured were so frightful, that they affected even the cold and emotionless hearts of their oppressors, and many a desponding maiden, and disconsolate wife, was, unsullied in her honour, restored to her bereaved and afflicted home. The destruction was, however, complete; and the unsheathed sword of the grim warrior, did not return to its scabbard till blunted with carnage and slaughter. Since the happy period when the brave and noble fell in the defence of their adopted country, the character of the Armenians has radically changed; honest industry, and laborious trade have ceased, and cunning, deceit, and every base method has been resorted to for a subsistence; and this once exemplary community, notorious for their moral lives, have become steeped in vice and tainted with every crime,—and the missionary now beholds, with a bleeding heart, this degraded and fallen Christian sect misrepresenting to the eye of the Mahomedan the beautiful and sublime teaching of the Gospel.

In the time of the Sefi dynasty, the Armenian community counted upwards of 20,000 inhabitants, but this large number has, within a century, dwindled down to less than 2,000 souls, and even this small remnant of a very respectable and thriving colony is on the decline; and were it not for the extensive ecclesiastical establishment, which has the countenance of the Russian embassy in Teheran, and the support of the Armenians in India, the suburb of Julfa would now be like other quarters of the city, an utter ruin and desolation. The churches do not appear to have suffered much in the time of the Affghan invasion, as, out of thirteen, ten are still standing, and used for divine service, with an ecclesiastical staff consisting of an archbishop, five bishops, and twenty-four priests; but notwith-

standing this numerous hierarchy, the lamp of truth is only dimly glimmering, and the doctrines of the Gospel little felt. Most of the priests are unacquainted with the old Armenian language, in which the services are written, and consequently the prayers are muttered over in a mumbling and suppressed tone, unintelligible to the minister, and certainly not edifying to his congregation. Sermons and expositions are things unheard of; the people abstain for three months in the year from eating meat, and this is considered a safe passport to heaven. We spoke on various occasions with Archbishop Kohannes on the subject, but the self-conceited old man, dead to all sense of his duty, was so addicted to drunkenness, that he would have made a far better priest of the orgies of Bacchus, than a minister of the Christian sanctuary. With the bishops it was useless to converse on any serious topic, as they knew nothing beyond the fasts and ceremonies of their Church. On one occasion, I spoke to the ex-archbishop, Karapeh, on the emblematical import of the Bible, and incidentally referred to the history of Joseph; the old man listened quietly, and evidently with surprise, to the strange things I told him. A few weeks after we met again; the bishop appeared rather shy and distant, and when I addressed him, abruptly said, "I have nothing to do with you, for you are as bad as the Romish priests, and say anything that comes into your mind, if it only advances your object." Upon my requesting him to explain the cause of this ill-temper, he turned to me his grey eyes, and in a passionate voice demanded whether I had not told him that the story of Joseph was in the Bible? Yes, I did, was my reply; "Now," continued he more excited, "I have told this to many learned Persians, and Armenians, and they all ridiculed my credulity, and assured me, that the history of Joseph was the Persian novel, 'Joseph and Zuleika.'" It was in vain to remonstrate, or to argue; he was convinced that our Bible was spurious, and our assertions unfounded. Petros Stephen, to whom I narrated my meeting with this titled shepherd, spoke to him about it, and I believe succeeded in convincing him that the history of Joseph was actually in the Bible.

When we arrived in Julfa we frequently expressed our indig-

nation at the public profanation of the Lord's-day; the whole week the streets looked empty and deserted, but on the Sabbath all was bustle and activity,—bishops, priests, and people, indiscriminately hastened to the market to make purchases, and to dispose of their goods. We spoke against this wicked practice to those with whom we came in contact. Meerza Daood, an opulent and influential Georgian merchant, approved of our remonstrance, and, backed by the authority of his uncle, Mehtummed-ad-Doulah, the governor of Ispahan, he transferred the market-day from the Christian, to the Jewish Sabbath. The Archbishop gave his consent and approbation to this arrangement, and for several Sundays, Mahomedan policemen were stationed at the gates, to prevent Christians from profaning and desecrating their own Sabbath. For a few weeks the market was not so well attended as usual, and the convent to which the place belongs sustained a trifling loss of a few shillings per month; the Archbishop took umbrage at this, and the original custom was restored.

Many of the horrible practices to which they are addicted, may be ascribed more to their wretched and destitute condition, than to the viciousness and irreclaimable depravity of their nature; for poverty in the East invariably engenders a miserable principle of base cheating, and cunning traffic; and if the Armenians have lost their good old character, a large share of the guilt and contumacy rests upon the governors and rulers, who, instead of elevating, by kindness and equity, the condition of a spoiled and ruined people, have, by their systematic grinding and oppressive taxation, made them what they now are—an outcast and despised people.

In leaving the Armenians, we came to another condemned, persecuted, and devoted people, who, if tradition can be credited, have, since the Babylonish captivity, been struggling with all the capricious vicissitudes of fortune on the spot where this ill-fated city stands. According to a Persian historian, the Yehudiah formed one of the two towns which constituted Ispahan, and the extent of the Jewish quarter verifies the assertion. Frequently, in going from one family to another, I traversed a labyrinth of streets and lanes, pent up with decayed



synagogues and ruined houses, without meeting with any living being, except troops of savage dogs, who were banqueting on the carcase of a camel, mule, or horse, which a pious Persian had thrown there to annoy the Jews, and to feed the starving, famished brutes.

The air of misery and wretchedness which distinguishes this quarter, accords too well with the touching picture of sorrow, grief, and hopelessness, which characterizes its inhabitants. Each house is the abode of want and indigence, and every individual seems devoured by corroding cares, and bent down with a grievous load of affliction ; even the women, whose elastic and light frames bear with more submission and resignation the hard lot, under which the stronger mind would often be overwhelmed and crushed, lose very early the lustre of their eyes, and, under a harassing weight of anxieties, all the lovely expressions which mark the youthful features of the Jewish maiden in the East. Often in our visits to these sad dwellings, where the voice of hope, faith and love is never heard, we beheld the most pitiful and affecting sights ; the rooms looked dismal and unfurnished, the inmates haggard, sallow, and careworn ; the children squalid, sickly and ragged ; in fact, such utter destitution would swell the bosom, and make the tears of any but an unfeeling Moslem flow.

The hopeless condition of this oppressed and ill-treated people is aggravated by the dark and cheerless prospects which loom in their future. Hated, despoiled, and deprived of every chance whereby to earn his daily bread, the poor Jew—whose person many consider morally defiled, and whose very touch all believe communicates contamination—is compelled to have recourse to the most degrading pursuits, to gain a parsimonious existence. Many, consequently, lead a gipsy life, and by fraud and fortune-telling alleviate the wants of nature ; others support themselves by cheating and peddling ; and the rest pamper the corrupt appetites of the *zootees*, and sell arrack, wine, and other inebriating, and not unfrequently poisonous draughts. These miserable occupations, which must engender the worst principles and stifle every moral sentiment, are not selected by the Jew optionally, but he is driven by his oppressors into the worst

vices, and compelled to become a most arrant and adept cheat. Many times have I spoken to individuals and congregations on this subject, and the reply was, "What are we to do? Shall we suffer our wives and helpless children to starve before our eyes, or shall we sell our sons to Moloch (Islamism), and our daughters to those who devour us?" Yet, notwithstanding these dishonest and fraudulent pursuits, to which slavery and intolerance condemn him, the Jew, with all his pilfering and cheating, is scrupulous and punctilious in the observance of his religious duties, and yearning with solicitude for the advent of the Redeemer. I have frequently seen an Israëlite, after having been maltreated by some Moslems, sitting down on the ground, exclaiming, with a tone in which hatred and sorrow were keenly blended, "Art thou not He that brought us from Egypt, out of the land of our captivity; and wilt thou not speedily send us the Messiah, and revenge our wrongs, and redeem us out of the hands of those profane dogs, the enemies of our holy law?"

Our arrival among such a people immediately excited great surprise and notoriety. The general inquiry was "Are we in error, and is the religion of the idolatrous Armenians true? Are these Franghees mad; or have they some political object in view?" All these mysterious conjectures, a few days' intercourse solved, and the suspicious and suspected strangers were the great friends and well-wishers of the outcast Jew. The late governor, Mehtummed-ad-Doulah, a Georgian by birth, and one of the greatest men and best rulers in Persia, heard of our intercourse and controversies with the Jews, and to satisfy his curiosity, and also to convince himself that we were not mad, requested us, through his physician, Daood Khan, to pay him a visit. On the day appointed we repaired to the palace—a noble, costly, and spacious edifice; we crossed several courts, surrounded with halls, and crowded with mullahs, ferashees, soldiers, and beggars, who were all indiscriminately pressing forward to pay their court, to deliver a petition, or obtain some commutation of taxes, or other imposition, from the governor or his minions.

To paddle our way through this stream of life would have been no easy task for a hated Gaour; but his Excellency fore-

saw this contingency, and, with the kindest consideration, stationed a guard at the entrance, who conducted us through this animated and busy throng, into the presence of the dreaded man. He was seated in a little room, looking out upon a lovely fragrant flower garden. Upon our entrance he immediately rose, and with a peremptory command ordering every one except his mullah to withdraw, welcomed us with great affability to his palace, and the city of Ispahan. After tea, coffee, and pipes, the conversation turned upon the object of our travels, and the success we had met with. Having answered these few interrogations, his Excellency asked us what were our opinions and views of Mohamed and the Koran? Who was referred to in Deuteronomy xviii. 15? Whom had Moses in view when he said, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them?" (Deut. xxxiii. 2.) What was the meaning of a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels, described in Isaiah xxi. 6, 7? And many other similar questions, of much research and ingenuity, which we answered according to our own views. He expressed himself much interested in our labours, and assured us that if the Jews embraced Christianity, he would take them under his special protection, and allow no one to molest or persecute them.

A few days after this interview we received several invitations to come to the palace, as the Mehtummed had summoned the Jewish mullahs to confer with us in his presence on the subject of the Messiah. Accompanied by our friend, the physician, we went to the official residence of his Excellency, where we were received with the greatest condescension and politeness. His Excellency himself opened the conference by a short address, in which he explained the object of our friendly meeting and the beneficial effects which might accrue from a careful investigation of the important subject of religion; he told the Jews that he sympathized with their deplorable position, of which, before our arrival, he was ignorant, and promised to take all their complaints under consideration at some future period. The conference lasted upwards of two hours, and though the Jews were

guarded in their expressions, and glossed over their own religious sentiments, in order to please the Mehtummed and his two friends, the only Mahomedans allowed to be present, still from their replies much was elicited to convince his Excellency that Christianity was the religion of Moses and the Prophets, and the only system which met the contingencies of our corrupt nature. We presented the governor and his friends with Arabic Bibles, and after a sumptuous breakfast in the palace, asked leave to depart, and returned to Julfa, grateful to our heavenly Father for having inclined the heart of the greatest man in the country in our favour.

This cordial reception by the dreaded ruler of the provinces, his urgent entreaties that we should settle down in Ispahan, and the willingness of the Jews to listen to our errand of mercy, with the many other advantages which the place afforded as a central mission to the Jews in Persia, induced us to recommend it as a permanent station. Our proposition having been submitted to the Committee for deliberation and reflection, was in due time adopted, and a few months after our return from Persia, we were again, in the very depth of winter, traversing the piercing cold and frozen regions of Iran. Our sufferings were great indeed; snow, rain, wet, and cold, waited on us alternately at every stage.

In Peresba, a small village of infamous notoriety, where, with our servants, I had gone in advance to secure a place in the caravanserai, we were attacked by a party of robbers, headed by the chief of the place, and having neither money nor other articles of value with me to satisfy the cupidity of these ruffians, I was wantonly maltreated, and left wounded and bleeding in the court of the traveller's home. On a subsequent occasion, when I visited the capital on matters of business connected with our mission, I lodged a complaint against the party who had been guilty of this outrageous assault with Her Britannic Majesty's minister at the court of Persia; who, having listened with much excitement and indignation to my statement, but suddenly recollecting that I was a Protestant, and not, as he may have heard from his friends the Romish priests in Julfa, favourably disposed to Popery, with great severity said: "I cannot afford you any

redress, as you have no legal claim to British protection." It was in vain to urge that there was no other European representative, except the Russian, to whom I could apply; I was a Protestant, and as such undeserving of a better treatment. How kind, generous and noble does the conduct of the Mehtummed appear in contrast with that of the British representative.

Without any letters of introduction, with which the majority of travellers are supplied, we arrived in the most bigoted and fanatical place in Persia; no obstructions are placed in our way, no difficulties opposed to our labours; the governor, a zealous Mahomedan, whose antipathy to Europeans is proverbial, spontaneously offers us every assistance, invites us to his palace, assembles the Jews in his presence, and tenders us every facility to the prosecution of our work. Such liberal conduct from a follower of the Koran might well have found an echo in the actions of a believer in the Gospel; but not so with this official; he is animated by a different spirit, and in a distant land, amongst a lawless people, as will be seen in the following pages, denied to two unoffending missionaries that little aid which, under most trying circumstances, they are forced to solicit. My wounds in the face became very painful under the influence of the cold and biting frost; but what could I do alone, in the midst of a dangerous country, with no friendly roof to shelter, and no cheering hearth to welcome the way-worn and wearied traveller; at such moments how consoling are the promises of Scripture, and with what patient resignation and submission to the supreme will do they inspire the desponding and depressed spirit; let the sceptic and the infidel seek for a remedy against the woes and ills of life under some illusive self-created system; a religion which affords comfort in tribulation, hope in adversity, which fills the soul with a sweet dependence on an all-pure and merciful God, and gives an earnest of happiness and bliss kept in store; yea, a religion which yields peace to the heart and support in every circumstance in which we can be placed; O, if such a revelation be false, let my mental eye be never undeceived nor the charm ever dispelled!

Near Ispahan we noticed many symptoms of ominous import, the peasants were loud in their complaints against the

government, and high language was used against the collectors of taxes and other imposts ; the road, too, was reported unsafe, and sad tales of theft and plunder circulated amongst the idle rustics. To the questions which we put to those whom we met, the laconic reply was, " the Mehtummed is ill." At the gates of the town the excitement was prodigious ; one declared, the governor was dead, another swore that he was not sick at all, whilst a third averred that it was only a trick to ensnare the disaffected and rebellious.

On a former occasion our luggage, after a formal inspection and an attempt to fleece us, was returned without any great trouble ; this time, however, every box was detained, and a heavy duty charged upon our books and wearing apparel. We applied to the British agent, Petros Stephen, but the poor man being an honest and respectable Christian, (quite a rarity among the English native employees,) had never been officially commended to the local authorities, and could therefore do nothing else but lend us a few articles for our immediate wants. Daood Khan, our old friend, tendered us again his kind offices, and represented the *Goomrockchee's* behaviour to the dying Mehtummed. His Excellency, with a promptitude which we could scarcely have expected at the critical moment when life was trembling in the balance, ordered the custom-house officers, at the peril of their heads, to restore us instantly all our effects.

The command was readily complied with, and we were rather glad than sorry for this unpleasant accident, as it convinced us that a short interval of time had wrought no alteration in the governor's favourable disposition to our efforts. But our high hopes were doomed to meet with a sudden bitter disappointment, our worthy patron and magnanimous friend, after a short illness, breathed his last. For a day or two his death was concealed, and the honest, peaceable, and industrious part of the population had time to secrete their most valuable property before the reckless *zooties* ventured on their frightful work of rapine and plunder. The savage passions of these desperadoes, which, during the Mehtummed's rule, had been forcibly suppressed by the glittering knife of the executioners, like an irresistible

torrent, broke forth and spread terror and confusion through every quarter of this extensive town.\* The Jews and Armenians, who seldom escape unscathed in any popular commotions, were, owing to the few favours which they enjoyed during the life-time of the late governor, the particular objects of the malice and hatred of these unprincipled ruffians, and many a cruel deed was perpetrated among these silent and patient sufferers. The Armenians had still an advantage over the Jews, for their suburb being isolated, and the principal streets defended by gates, they could defy the heterogeneous mass of which the Ispahan rabble is composed ; but not so the Jews, domiciled in the worst part of the town, and surrounded by all the refuse and off-scouring of the populace, with their spirits broken and their hearts desponding, they submissively endured all the dire misery which cupidity, bigotry and lawlessness could inflict. Our own position during this wild turmoil was very critical; the Ketkhoda of Julfa sent us a friendly message that we should not frequent the town, nor even venture unnecessarily in the streets of Julfa, as he could not, in the mutinous state of the place, afford us any assistance in case of emergency. We were, however, not intimidated by this, or other kind warnings, as we knew Europeans were too much dreaded in Persia, even by the worst characters, to offer any other violence to their persons beyond a harmless hissing and pelting with invulnerable missiles, such as rotten apples and orange peel, to which experience had made us quite impervious. We, therefore, in dependence on Him who had been with us in so many troubles, continued our work; and an extract or two from my journal will show, that we had a wide, interesting and promising field of labour before us.

On the Feast of Purim, the Jewish mullahs came to Julfa to see us. We were quite astonished to see a company of grey-haired venerable men, exposing themselves to the insults of an unrestrained fanatical mob, in order to have some conversation with Christian missionaries.

\* The Ispahanees assert that during the Mehtummed's governorship upwards of 700 *zooties* were publicly and privately beheaded.

Mullah Jacob, a perfectly blind man, said : "I have been falling more than ten times on my way to Julfa, and yet, though I cannot see you, I do not regret the trouble of having come to you."

*We.*—"And we hope your visit will be beneficial to you."

*Blind Mullah.*—"The Lord has laid upon me three great afflictions, *viz.*, poverty, blindness, and old age."

*We.*—"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and although he conceals from your sightless eyes the wonderful works of his creation, yet we trust he has not hidden from your mental vision the glorious plan of redeeming mercy, but by the light of his spirit has shone into your heart, and revealed to your immortal soul that great light, which, whosoever followeth, shall not walk in darkness."

The conversation now became general, and the mullahs, though they made some slight objections to several important truths which we brought before them, yielded to many essential differences. They allowed that Jesus must have been the Messiah; acknowledged the need of an all-sufficient sacrifice, and admitted the necessity of an Almighty Saviour. We replied, "If you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, confess that we can only be redeemed through the merits of his blood, and saved by faith in his name. Why, if you are sincere in your profession, do you not come boldly forward and cry, "We have found the Messiah of whom Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles do testify?"

They seemed confused, and hardly knew what reply to make. Mullah Elijah, after a pause, affirmed that they read daily in the New Testament. We told him that the reading alone was not sufficient, nor would it be of any avail in the day of judgment. "What then must we do?" "The New Testament answers your question, when it tells you to believe, and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Mullah Solomon most seriously answered, "We baptized each other when we were in the bath last Friday." We showed them the guilt of this dissimulation and hypocrisy, and admonished them not to trifle with such a momentous subject, since their eternal well-being was pending on the issue. These



poor straying sheep really deserve our prayers and intercessions at the throne of grace. Some glimmering of Divine light has indeed broken in upon their long night ; but, alas ! their hearts have so much vegetated in sin and vice, and luxuriated in every evil passion, that they have become callous in, and indifferent to, everything that cannot be rendered subservient to their temporal interests, and the bent of their corrupt nature. In our intercourse with these masters in Israel, we, however, frequently met with pleasing instances, which proved that our labour had not been in vain, nor our strength spent for nought ; thus Mullah Eliyahu, the oldest rabbi with whom we had some conversation on topics of great import, said, “ I can assure you that I am in the greatest strait, I know not what to do, for to believe that Christ was the Son of God is incompatible with my feeble understanding, and to argue with you about the orthodoxy of our faith is also quite impossible.” We advised him to pray for the illumination of the Spirit, who was the only sure guide to life and eternal happiness. On another occasion we had a long discussion with the Chief Rabbi ; the old man, with a dejected countenance and depressed spirits, sat quiet and calm, listening with undivided attention to all we said ; but when we spoke to him of his advanced age, and reminded him of his nearness to eternity, the necessity of a change of heart, and faith in the promised Redeemer, he started up, rushed between us, and with tears streaming down his wan cheeks, entreated us not to urge this matter upon him.

This Jewish rabbi, who seemed truly convinced of his errors, would gladly avow his faith in the Triune Jehovah, were it not for the dread he has of Mahomedan cruelty, and the fear he entertains of ending his mortal career in a dungeon, or on the rack.

One of the greatest difficulties with which the missionary to the Jews in Persia has to contend, is Islamism. This inveterate enemy to Christianity, as in the days of old, when the flame of unrelenting animosity was first kindled, so now, after a lapse of nearly thirteen centuries, still breathes the same revengeful spirit, and wages the same indomitable hatred. The poor exiled Jew, who in his iron bondage only thinks of the calamities

which threatened his brethren a few years ago in Hamadan, the dangers that awaited those in Teheran, and the massacre which actually took place in Meshed, imagines that no greater evil can befall his people, than their giving a public preference to Christianity before Islamism. It is indeed impossible to conceive the terrors which fill the minds of the Jews in Persia. O, how often did I grieve at seeing these children of Zion, and descendants of Abraham, trembling at the frown and trying to laugh with the smile of a Mahomedan! I have frequently at great personal risk lifted up my unwilling hand to avert the blow intended for an innocent Jew. How long will the baneful system of Islamism bar the benign influence of the Gospel in these regions of midnight darkness! The various fortunes with which the Jews in the East have had to contend since the days of their captivity, notwithstanding the sad and deplorable influence which they have had upon their general character, have very little affected their manners or customs; and wherever the messenger of the cross now goes to this wonderful and ill-treated people, he needs only to follow the example of the apostle of old, and with his Bible in hand proceed to the synagogue, and whether on week or sabbath-days, an audience will soon congregate around him, to hear the new doctrines which he may have to propound. Mr. Sternschuss and myself generally found this the best and easiest method of making known the object of our visit; and, invariably, after the first discourse or discussion in the house of prayer, the charm of novelty attracted crowds to our house, who were anxious to converse more on the vital truths of the Gospel, which till then they had neglected and despised. In Ispahan, where, owing to our unprotected position, we were obliged to live at a considerable distance from the Jewish quarter, the synagogue usually formed our Church, and the reading desk our pulpit,\* for preaching Christ crucified; and I confess that on many occasions the solemn countenance, individual attention, and grave deportment of our audience, might have impressed an *en passant* visitor with the idea that the whole congregation were Christians.

\* The German Jews call this place Almemor, from the Latin *memoria*.

Now and then, as is customary among rabbinical Jews, a champion would stand up to assail the arguments of the preacher, or to defend the faith in which he had grown up; but this was always done with the kindest and best feelings, and with the avowed purpose of illiciting more information on the question at issue. We had frequently such conferences; but, as a consecutive journal of missionary work would fill several volumes, which is not my present object, I shall adduce only a few brief extracts, to show that the prejudices against Christianity, which Popery has instilled into the mind of the Jew, in countries where this corrupt system is openly practised, are not known in that part of the East where Rome has not yet extended her supremacy and pagan worship. Thus, one morning, soon after our arrival, long before the sun had risen on the pleasure-loving Ispahanees, we were on our way to town; our journey, through the net-work of lanes, alleys, bazaars, and ruins, towards the synagogue, was a work which, without a guide, we could never have accomplished. The large synagogue, like all Jewish places of worship, is in the most inhabited part of the Ghetto, hemmed in on all sides by miserable and decayed houses, which in time of commotion or peace, serve as a weak defence against the intrusion of the fanatical destroyer, and the base robber. We were received by the mullahs at the door, and conducted to a seat before the ark of the law. When the prayers were concluded, we ascended the desk, and at considerable length expounded the various prophecies which predict the character and work of the Redeemer. They were very candid and frank in their answers, and admitted all that we said on the incarnation of our Saviour, the miracles which authenticated his divine mission, the obedience to God, and love to man which he displayed; and, lastly, his death and resurrection, which confirmed his mission, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel; but, when we closely pointed out to them the holiness of God's law, the heinousness of sin, and the awful punishment menaced to all those who did not seek for shelter under the justifying merits of the Redeemer, all the tender chords of their consciences were unstrung, and, like Nathanael, they were ready to exclaim, "Jesus, thou art the Son of God, the King of

Israel!" Such ecstatic words I have frequently heard from the lips of Jews, when affected and excited; but the impression was not lasting, nor did the conviction assume an enduring form. Under the impulse of the moment, they would beat their knees to a compassionate Saviour, and sue for pardon and forgiveness; and the next minute, they were ready to stifle every holy and sacred feeling, and banish from their hearts every ray of Gospel-light. The Eastern Jew shrinks at the idea of making any sacrifice at the shrine of religion and truth. "Allah Kerim!" (God is merciful!) he has learnt from the Mahomedans, and, with these words in his mouth, he will, if dangers or difficulties threaten him, deny his need of God, and acknowledge not one, but all the prophets of the Moslem faith. Many such characters I have had under instruction. As long as everything went on smooth, they were full of hope, confidence, and reliance on Christ; but, no sooner did the dark shades of trouble and persecution gather around them, than they retraced their steps from the path of heaven, and, for the sake of the few unsatisfactory worldly consolations and temporary comforts, bartered all the blessings of the regions of glory and realms of immortality.

On another occasion, after a long sermon on the advent, atonement, and sacrifice of our Saviour, an individual in the assembly, who evidently disliked the onerous burthen of the rabbinical precepts and injunctions, got up and said, "Your religion is very easy, it neither enjoins ceremonies, nor requires any particular sacrifice; ours, on the contrary, is fraught with so many commands that it occupies the whole life of a Jew to become thoroughly acquainted with all." On being asked whether an unwearied performance of the whole Rabbinical code would curb the passions, sanctify the heart, and bring a man nearer to his God? he paused, looked round, and candidly replied, "No." He was then told that Christianity refined the human breast, ennobled the dark mind, filled the soul with holy aspirations, and brought the fallen creature into close communion with his redeeming Lord. They all seemed quite astonished at these effects being attributed to the Gospel, and asked with much apparent sincerity and anxiety, whether

rites and ceremonies were quite useless. The reply was, "If they are calculated to edify, they are expedient; and if not, they defeat their own object and ought to be cancelled." They confessed that there was much of sound argument in what we said, though they could not believe that the Gospel required such a thorough change of life and conduct as we stated. We read to them the account of our Lord's intercourse with Nicodemus; but they were as much astonished and surprised at the doctrine of regeneration and a new birth, as the Pharisee of old. We gave them some tracts, and then took our leave.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### WANT OF PROTECTION AT ISPAHAN.

WHILST we were thus quietly prosecuting our work, Ispahan continued to be the theatre of the most detestable passions, and most sanguinary conflicts; the zootees, the licensed robbers and assassins of Persia, daily, without reflection or remorse, perpetrated every imaginable and repulsive crime with impunity. Meerza Gourgeen Khan, who had succeeded the Mehtummed in the government, instead of stemming the torrent of corruption and vice, which overpowered the town, and tainted the very atmosphere with a moral poison, by his licentiousness and profligacy sanctioned and countenanced the proceedings of these dreaded banditti and abandoned ruffians. The governor on several occasions, as we were informed by creditable persons, expressed himself in no very measured terms about our protracted residence and intercourse with the inhabitants of the place; the mullahs, too, whose power in Ispahan is supreme, threw out unmistakable hints; and as we had to fear more for the Jews than ourselves, from the rancorous hate of these excitable bigots, the only alternative left us, was, either to relinquish our field of labour, or to procure some nominal protection. The latter plan, after prayerful deliberation, was adopted, and I proceeded to Teheran, to represent our position to Her Majesty's minister at that place, in the hope of obtaining his friendly protection for the limited space of three months, till we could communicate with our patrons, and have their opinion before we ourselves took any decisive steps. With what feelings I entered on this errand, an abstract of my letter to the Committee, dated Teheran, will best explain.

“The missionary in Persia, although he has much to bewail in every place he visits, yet I believe there is no town in this country where his heart becomes more saddened, and his spirits

depressed, than in the ill-fated capital of Iran. Here he has not only to encounter the opposition and hate which the followers of Mahomed everywhere evince against the light and knowledge of the Gospel; but he has to contend against the jarring party-spirit of the Christian representatives, who, in their ardour to protect the respective creeds which they favour, out-rival in animosity to Protestants the misguided followers of the Arabian prophet. Those who have the welfare of the people of this country at heart, cannot but lament, that at the present moment, when a spirit of inquiry is spreading among the Jews, the tide of infidelity sapping the foundation of Islamism, and a regenerating movement characterizing the ancient missionary church of the Nestorians, that the great Protestant nation, beneath whose broad banner the humble heralds of the cross have hitherto everywhere found protection, encouragement, and aid, should, at this important crisis, be represented by a Roman Catholic envoy, who, from what I have seen, does certainly not value very highly the services of a Protestant missionary. The Shah, and other enlightened men, who would be delighted to see their people emerge out of the moral degradation into which they have sunk,—have all their information about missionaries filtered through the corrupt channel of European infidels, or other no less exceptional mediums. It may, therefore, be easily conceived that nothing but the greatest urgency could have induced me to visit Teheran, to ask a favour of Colonel Shiel; or to listen to unsparing reflections on the missionary work, from professionally nominal Christians—is more painful to me than to be maltreated by drunken zootees, or pelted by a lawless mob.”

At my first interview with Colonel Shiel, I briefly informed him of the cause and motive of my journey, and solicited him to extend to us for a few months the favour which his predecessors had always kindly conferred on other missionaries. His reply was, “Your Committee does not appear to sympathize with you very much, or else it would not have sent you to Persia without providing for your safety and protection!” and, changing the subject, he pointedly inquired whether I followed St. James or St. Paul. I told him that I followed both, because both followed Christ. And, not willing to have any religious discussion,

I again repeated my request. He rejoined, "Very well; I shall look over my despatches, and let you know in two days."

At the appointed time I made another official call, when he read me part of a despatch, in which it was stated, that "if any European, whether lay or ecclesiastic, was in danger of life and property, the envoy was to interfere and protect that person." I remarked upon this, that our case came within the compass of these instructions, since we had been insulted, maltreated, and even plundered, and scarcely knew what difficulties awaited us, in our embarrassing circumstances and the distracted state of the country, whether we remained or departed. His reply was, "I shall mention your case to Lord Palmerston by next post; but as he is not a church-goer, like Lord Aberdeen, who would have given you protection, as he did to the American missionaries in Oroomiah, I do not think it will be of any avail."\*

These words, which rang in my ears like the knell of my hopes, expectations, and prayers, were calculated to chill the ardour of my mind, and to cloud the bright visions which, in every new missionary scene where the Gospel is faithfully preached, lend an enchanting and cheering aspect to the coming future. But such was not the case; we had a holy object in view, and a noble duty to perform; and, whether cheered by friends, or opposed by enemies, we had One to rely on, who is a help in every trouble; and to Him we could commit our all, conscious that He would never leave nor forsake us. Such were the supports which sustained me then, and have done so ever since. I have invariably found the truth of the old adage, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

On my journey I met with many pleasing indications to encourage, cheer, and animate me in my efforts for the conversion of Israel. In Kashan, a town containing two hundred Jewish families, my preaching excited the greatest sensation; even Moslems crowded the house of my entertainer, Mullah Aaron, the head of the Jews, and requested me to tell them why I preferred the religion of Isau-Jesus to the teachings of Mahomed. The governor, who had lost the favour of the king,

\* I disclaim any personal feeling in stating this case, as it would ill become a messenger of the Gospel; my sole object being to show the necessity of obtaining protection before hand.



was quite delighted to hear of the arrival of such a famous and learned mullah, as report made me, and with the most cringing humility his servants came and requested me to repair to the palace and read his Excellency's destiny in the illimitable field of the stars. It was in vain that I protested and pleaded ignorance of astrology, my reputation was established, and my boundless wisdom the topic of every lip. Besides this, I knew Hebrew and Arabic, the two celestial tongues in which Heaven communicated with mortals, and *nolens volens*, I must unravel to the governor the secret of his future career.

My host, Mullah Aaron, whose niece, a betrothed bride of great beauty, the governor had only a few days previously seized for his own harem, advised me to deceive this wily ruler, whose displeasure was dangerous, by a cunning, grave imposition; an idea, which I at once repudiated, and as I had already by my prognostications incurred his wrath, I shortened my stay, and after having sold, for £13 5s., Bibles and New Testaments, I bade farewell to my Jewish friends and departed.

The failure of my mission in Teheran did not exert a favourable influence on our residence in Ispahan, and it became our imperious duty to bow in submission to the will of Him who ordereth all things aright,—to relinquish a sphere of usefulness where only troubles and persecutions menaced us and those with whom we came in contact. The difficulty was how to proceed, with books and luggage, unfurnished with any papers from the local authorities, and at a moment when the provinces were overrun with rapacious and daring nomades, and rebellious and discontented peasants; happily, at this contingency, Mr. Tasker, an English Roman Catholic, whose untimely death in Sheeraz is much to be regretted, arrived in Ispahan, and kindly offered us the use of his firman and the protection of his retinue, if we travelled together. We gladly accepted this kind proposition, and reached Sheeraz in safety. During our stay there, the town was in a continuous state of strife, dissension and bloodshed. Hossein Khan, the governor of the province, had been summoned by the capricious minister, Hodjee Meerza Aghasee, to the capital, and his vicegerent, who had neither courage nor intellect to govern the reckless and bold insurgents, suffered the

spirit of riot to spread without offering the least resistance, till the whole place was transformed into a lazar-house of corruption and crime. To venture into the streets without a numerous train of well-armed servants was a perilous undertaking; we occasionally went to the Jewish quarter through unfrequented bye streets, but it was always attended with jeopardy; and on one occasion, had it not been for the guardian care of our Heavenly Father, who restrained the arm of the murderer when his dagger was uplifted for the fell deed, the writer of these pages might long since have mouldered on a foreign shore, and mingled his mortal remains with the soil which he has often sorrowfully trod.

I have thus, in order not to retrace the same ground, which would swell this work beyond its intended bounds, deviated from the course of events. I shall, therefore, now return again to the gorgeous city of Abbas the Great, which, notwithstanding all its disasters and misfortunes, civil wars and foreign invasion, is still the largest and most imposing city in Central Asia.

The number of palaces, bazaars, gardens, and promenades, which have survived the ravages of the Affghans, is still prodigious; and many, for beauty, splendour, and extent, would not be deemed unworthy to grace a fashionable town in Europe. The Chehar Baugh,—the public pleasure ground, where thousands of Ispahanees may be seen on a gala-day, loitering among the beds of roses, narcissus, and other fragrant shrubs, singing love-songs and smoking *calecons*,—is the most lovely and luxurious avenue the imagination can picture. It is, including a magnificent bridge of thirty-three arches over the Zeinderood, about a mile long, and lined with four rows of stately chinar trees, planted in ages long since past. This spacious ground, nicely adjusted into equi-distant parterres, and watered by perpetually running canals, which fall from foaming cascades down into square and octagonal basins, comprises all that is attractive, exhilarating and soothing to the feelings and taste of an oriental. On the sides are the Hesht Behesht, or eight paradises, with their pleasure grounds and gay pavilions, which both diversify and add to the picturesque aspect of the sylvan scene.

There are many other palaces, which, though deserted and uninhabited, still continue monuments of the elegance, luxury and

wealth of the Sefi monarchs ; but the Chehel Sitoon, or forty pillars, which recall to mind the visionary tales of the ingenious mistress of Shahriar, excels all that fancy can conceive of oriental splendour, profusion and prodigality. This princely residence is at present untenanted. I visited it in spring, when the trees which surround it were covered with dense foliage, and the flowers with expanding buds. The entrance hall, which faces the garden, is one sparkling profusion of chrystal and gilding ; I found my eyes quite dazzled by the glare which, under the noon-tide rays, reflected from the glass pillars, and richly mirrored walls. From this magnificent hall I passed through a glass door into another grand and imposing saloon, where the great Abbas kept his midnight orgies, and received the ambassadors of conquered and allied nations ; it is an imposing, lofty, and spacious room, richly ornamented from the ceiling down to the floor, on which latter is still spread the costly carpet of the founder ; the walls are embellished with six large paintings, which display both the taste and elegance, as well as the intemperance and licentiousness, of the Persian court at that period. Contiguous to the Chehel Sitoon are several edifices of beauty and note ; but as there is such a great uniformity and sameness in all these structures, a description of each would scarcely be admissible.

In issuing out of this silent wilderness of glass, flowers and palaces, where solitude reigns and deep gloom dwells, the scene suddenly changes, and the ear, which for hours only listened to the warbling notes of the retired nightingale's song, is deafened by the confused and tumultuous noise of the busy throng, collected on the Maidan. This vast area, which is situated at the entrance of the royal domains, and the labyrinthine emporiums of trade, presents during the morning, when the tide of activity has set in, a most animated and variegated sight ; donkeys, mules, horses, and camels, loaded with provisions from the villages, may be seen wending their way between seats and booths, where petty merchants have to the best advantage spread out their divers wares.

Sometimes in these narrow passages a line of donkeys, laden with brushwood, encounter a string of mules, charged with

bulky bales of cotton, and as both quadrupeds are notorious for obstinacy, stupidity, and heedlessness, a desperate pushing and kicking ensues. The vendors of goods, who tremble for their stalls, increase the babel by their clamour, curses, and imprecations, in which the animals and their owners, to the remotest generations, come in for the greatest share.

When the way has been cleared and the neighing and fighting subsided, the poor merchant, whose temper the incident has ruffled, will jump up from his carpet, stroke his beard, and with uplifted hands invoke the wrath of heaven upon the town, the people, and all who first proposed that cities should have Maidans. At noon the bustling noise subsides, and the bread, eabaub, sherbet and pickle sellers perambulate the arca, and at the very top of their voices recommend their delicacies to the exhausted groups, who stand together dilating on the fortunes of the day, or, worn out with fatigue, bask in the intense heat of the scorching sun.

Amidst all the conflicting interests of the Maidan, the medical profession is the most lucrative and conspicuous ; from morning till late at noon the worthy disciples of Æsculapius, with their razors and scissors stuck in their belts, may be seen loitering about with an aspiring, vain and impudent mien, offering their skilful services to the ailing and sick. Their invariable nostrums are bleeding. I have been many a time horrified at the sight of a dozen of peasants, sitting on the heated pavement with their bodies denuded to the waist, and the surgeons bending over them, cutting with all their strength and might into the backs and temples of their submissive patients, till the blood in profusion gushed out of every vein and washed the stones with a crimson stream.

The bazaar, which is connected with the large square by a strong gate, furnishes a melancholy, but true picture of the decline and misfortunes of this once thriving and flourishing royal city. For miles the vaulted receptacles of commerce, industry and wealth extend through the centre of the town, and when crowded with the manufactures of the East and West, and thronged by the merchants of all climes, must have justi-

fied the vain boast, "*Ispahan nespe jehan est.*" (Ispahan is half the world.) But these happy days of prosperity belong to the vision of the past; at present all is desolation and decay; the bazaars are in ruins and scantily occupied, the caravanserais empty and neglected, the mosques, with few exceptions, out of repair, the colleges abandoned and forsaken, and a visible blight rests upon the former metropolis of the Sefi race.

According to the most accurate information I could obtain from some of the ketkhodas of the various mahallahs, the town is conjectured to contain two hundred thousand inhabitants; but this number, small as it is compared with the millions which peopled its streets scarcely two centuries ago, may yet be much reduced, considering the dilapidated and desolate condition which characterizes its whole extent.

The climate is salubrious; the winter excessively cold, frequently for days in succession the thermometer was below the freezing point; the poor and rich during the severity of the frost are perfectly helpless and inert, and those who can afford it seldom leave their *courciés*, or expose themselves to the cold invigorating breath of heaven.

With the Eid-e-Nawrooz, or the feast of the vernal equinox, a relic of the ancient creed, which bigotry could not suppress nor fanaticism obliterate, commences the season of industry and diligence; the weather is then delightful, and the teeming soil round Ispahan, celebrated for fertility, without any hard toil from the husbandman becomes decked with the most lovely vegetation. The people, after their imprisonment for several months in the confined atmosphere of the harems, are so enchanted with the change, that they protract the feast for upwards of sixteen days; during the whole of this time the inviting retreats of the Chehar Baugh, Hesht Behesht, Chehel Sitoon, &c., &c., are polluted by the greatest licentiousness and most shameless debauchery.

In summer and autumn, when the fruits are ripe, fever, dysentery and ague prevail throughout the town, and hundreds of individuals fall victims to their own immoderate indulgence in the luxurious produce of the gardens. I have frequently

seen persons devour a maund (seven pounds and a half) of melons, or a similar quantity of grapes, without feeling disinclined to partake of a smoking pilau and a bowl of sherbet immediately afterwards; such gluttony naturally engenders fever, and sends multitudes in the prime of life to an untimely grave.

As the time of our departure drew nigh, considerable anxiety was expressed both by Jews and Armenians about our return, and future settlement amongst them; and although, as before stated, our best intentions and endeavours were frustrated, still I have the sustaining confidence, that our short and eventful ministry in that ill-fated city has awakened much religious inquiry, and paved the way, should providential indication warrant it, for the future heralds of the Gospel.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### DEPARTURE FROM ISPAHAN.

ON the 14th of March, with the last rays of the sun, we emerged out of the gate of the city; the evening was calm and beautiful, the atmosphere mild and exhilarating, and the odorous bland winds as they drearily sighed through the groves, and brushed along the solitary walls and mouldering mounds of former habitations, imparted a deep interest to the deserted and razed suburb which we traversed, and awakened a solemn and devout strain of reflection on the instability and transitoriness of all that is material and sublunary. As the shadows of night collected around us, and in its huge dark folds embraced the wide-spreading city, with all her palaces, groves, gardens, and ruins, our progress became greatly impeded by the numerous broken-up canals, and empty water-courses, which in days past irrigated and fructified the finest district in Iran. At nine o'clock we halted in one of the numerous caravanserais, which, as I have before stated, perpetuate the name and benevolence of the mother of the great Abbas.

From this to Kohrood, the country we traversed looked sterile, blasted, and uninhabited; near the village, however, everything assumed a new phasis,—trees, gardens, comfortable houses, and abundance of water diffused cheerfulness over the rocky region, and gave a happy and contented aspect to the dwellers in the glen.

We made our munzil in the house of a kind peasant, who accommodated us by night in the same dormitory occupied by his family, an honour which we would gladly have dispensed with, as we stood in need of rest, which the squalling and squeaking of the younger branches of the establishment did not permit us much to enjoy. With dawn we were again mounted, and scrambling our way through the rugged narrow defile of

Kohropd. At the top of the pass the prospect was sublime and overwhelmingly grand; at our feet lay the extensive plain of Koshan, studded with pleasant villages and mulberry plantations; behind us, in magnificent confusion, were yawning ravines and shagged rocks of every shape and hue, and miles beyond, close to the verge of the horizon, rose the dark and bold range of the Elburg, with the glistening snow-clad Demanend tapering its lofty cone to the sky.

When we had descended the rocky steep the sun was already in the meridian, and the heat so powerful that the sudden transition from the Sardesir, cold, into the Germasir, hot region, filled us all with a burning feverish sensation. We urged our muleteer to speed on his animals, and about three o'clock, P.M., parched, oppressed, and ill at ease, found ourselves in one of the comfortable caravanserais so deservedly celebrated by all travellers. A short rest, cold ablution, cup of tea, and the excitement of a new place, expelled the poison of fever from our veins, and before the mullahs from the tops of the mosques were summoning their dilatory congregations for the noon-tide prayer, we were in the synagogue, surrounded by a goodly number of the stray sheep of the house of Israel. There was no necessity for explaining the object of our visit, our arrival was anticipated, and many of our books, which had been forwarded from other places, heralded the message we came to proclaim. Our first interview convinced us that the position of the Jews here was more propitious than in other towns; there was nothing of that cringing and fawning spirit which submits to every insult, and stoops to the vilest servitude, nor did their dress show the faded tattered rag, the distinctive mark of confirmed misery and suffering. At the very entrance to the synagogue the mullahs showed their courage by refusing admittance to some Mahomedans; the offended followers of the prophet were indignant and abusive, but the rabbies rigorously enforced their injunctions, and for the first time I beheld with pleasure the proud Moslem yielding to the despised and abandoned Jew. Our conference, which lasted about an hour, was animated and lively, and our opponents displayed much ability and ingenuity in their arguments. Like all Eastern Jews, they



had confused and strange notions about Christianity, and with profound amazement gazed at us whilst we explained the plan of salvation, which under types and prophetic visions was declared under the old, and fully developed in the new, covenant. The few who were acquainted with the Talmud, and staunch defenders of tradition, made several sarcastic and insidious reflections on the doctrine of the blessed Trinity ; but a few quotations from the writings of their admired sages, and some incontrovertible passages of Scripture, which plainly declare this divine truth, changed their smiles into seriousness, and their ire into admiration. We distributed several tracts and New Testaments, and, thankful to God for having permitted us to proclaim to these perishing souls the truth as it is in Jesus, returned wearied in body, but refreshed in spirit, to our noisy lodging in the caravanserai.

There is something affecting in preaching the glad tidings of salvation to the Jew in Persia, which awakens the deepest sympathies, and the best affections of the heart ; in more genial climes, where the Gospel sounds continually chime in his ear, and the happy and benign influence of Christianity shed rays of peace and security around his dwelling, a tenaciousness of ancient prejudices, and an obstinate adherence to tenets which the Bible does not teach, alone prevent him from becoming acquainted with a faith whose happy effects he cannot deny ; but here he is shut out from all intercourse with Christians, never hears the name of the blessed Redeemer, except as it is interwoven with a creed which makes him the scorn of the vile, and the bondsman of the cruel ; which converts his home into a dungeon, and teaches him to hold even his life, on a most precarious tenure. Cold, therefore, must be the heart that is not touched by sorrows and woes like those of the Elamite Jew ; and little must the bosom be animated by the spirit of the Divine Saviour, that does not burn with yearning compassion to cheer with the consolations of religion his hopeless present, and to illuminate with Gospel light the dark vista of his approaching future.

On the following day we were engaged, from early in the morning till late in the evening, in the privileged work of

pointing scores of the sons of Abraham to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." That these efforts softened the prejudices, and subdued much of the spirit of opposition on my subsequent journey was fully evinced. I was then no more considered a stranger and a preacher of new doctrines, but welcomed as a brother, and treated as a friend; the house of the most respectable Jew was my home, the synagogue for hours every day my place of preaching, and the demand for books so great, that after I had disposed of my extensive stock I had to write to my fellow-labourer, Mr. Sternschuss, for a fresh supply, and of these not a single volume remained in my possession. That the spirit of inquiry, once aroused, did not prove a vapid impression is fully demonstrated in the concluding chapter. It is true we cannot, as a seal of God's favour on our work, point to numerous baptized converts and flourishing communities, but let all the onerous restrictions which fetter the Jew in that country be removed, and let him have the assurance that the believers in the Koran will not dare to compel him to acknowledge Mahomed if he professes faith in Christ, and we shall soon, under the blessing of our merciful God, gather in the first fruits of an abundant and glorious harvest.

Koshan, unlike the majority of Persian cities, has a bustling and business-like appearance, and the most careless observer must be struck by the noise and deafening clangour, which, for more than twelve hours daily, reverberate through the vaulted arcades of the bazaar. These volcanic sounds proceed from the copper manufactories, which are the staple trade in the city. I frequently, during my visits, past an hour or two in the smoky work-shops of these toiling artisans, and was quite surprised at the ingenuity and skill which they displayed in the design and finish of their wares. Most of the articles manufactured are elaborately engraved with flowers, animals, and passages from the Koran, and the dexterity and ease with which this ornamental part is done, renders the difference in the price quite immaterial. The copper is brought from Sivas and Astrachan, and was forming a lucrative trade, but competition has spoiled

the market, and the industrious coppersmith now scarcely gains sufficient to maintain himself and family.

The silk-worm, which is extensively bred in the town and its environs, has also diffused a spirit of activity and diligence amongst the inhabitants, and women and children may be seen in the streets preparing the warp, whilst the men energetically ply the shuttles behind their looms. The Jews are the principal dyers, and the colours they produce are so beautiful that their reputation is established throughout the land.

The climate of Koshan is justly deemed insalubrious; in summer the heat is most oppressive, and all the inhabitants take refuge in deep serdaubs, or cellars, which sometimes prove dangerous retreats, as these cool shelters are infested by a black scorpion of a most venomous species.

A big-turbaned Mahomedan mullah, whom on my second visit I met in the house of Hakim Aaron, pretended that he possessed the power of conjuring every poisonous reptile, and as he professed great friendship for me, he only requested a small douceur for making me also impervious to the sting of these deadly creatures. Before I would accept the charm, consisting of a piece of sugar wrapped in a few dirty rose leaves, over which he mumbled some mysterious unmeaning words, I insisted upon testing first his own invulnerability, not by a torpid reptile from a box which he carried with him, but by a scorpion fresh from the serdaub; to this he would not submit, and with much concern he assured my friends, that want of faith had deprived me of a secret which the blessed angel, Gabriel, himself had communicated to the great prophet Mahomed.

Koshan is supposed to contain about thirty thousand souls, including a hundred and fifty Jewish families. It is situated on the skirts of the great salt desert of Khorasan, and from the distance has the appearance of an oasis rising from the midst of a parched sandy plain. The inhabitants are proverbial for their cowardice, mendacity, and dissolute habits. Of all these traits I had many illustrations; but the missionary, in every village and city which he traverses, witnesses such gross scenes of human depravity and corruption, that the character of the nation is best

described in the words of the Apostle, (Eph. iv. 19,) "Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

*March 22nd.*—Early in the morning we bade farewell to the kind Jews, who came to bid us God speed, and then entered upon our journey. The beautiful scenes which, since leaving Bushire, had diversified and enlivened the monotony of our sickening caravan travelling, were now concealed behind one of the gigantic limbs of the Taurus; and the white glaring soil of the trackless Kuveer began to blend its unproductive salt patches with the fertile and teeming vales of the smiling Iran. At night we reached our munzil, Passangour, and the next day at noon traversed the thinly-tenanted streets of the ancient city of Koom. This place, in point of sanctity, holds the next rank to Mecca and Kerbelai; it is conveniently situated for pilgrimages, and during the Mahomedan festival of Nowrooz, its streets are thronged by the pious and devoted, who come to perform their devotions, and to make votive offerings at the shrine of Fatimah-al-Masoomah, (Fatimah the immaculate). The remains of this female saint repose beneath a stately and magnificent mosque, which has become gradually enriched by the munificent bequests of the ruling monarchs. Feth-Ali-Shah, who claimed peculiar sanctity, frequently visited this holy shrine on foot, and to confirm his saintly reputation, paid for the repairs of the mausoleum and the gilding of its fine cupola. There are numberless other beatified personages interred within the precincts of the city, and a devotee who wishes to propitiate the favour of all has an onerous task to perform. This veneration for patron saints and tutelary demigods, which is the excrescence of every corrupt system of religion, instead of raising the heart to the invisible Being, who is the centre of all our hopes, affections and devotions, debases and imbecilitates the mind, and leads vain man to invest a mortal creature with attributes which alone belong to the Supreme Creator. That the pretended religious enthusiasm which holy relics and shrines are supposed to inspire is a fatal delusion, Koom, and every other sacred spot that I have visited, whether blended with the purer system

of Christianity or the gross teachings of Mahomed, strikingly attests.

The streets, caravanserais, and even the venerated precincts of the mausoleum, are the scenes of the most debasing indulgences, and loathsome sensualities. The numberless lazy seyids and sombre mullahs, who greatly swell the population, connive at all abominable vices, and, without remorse of conscience, draw a liberal per centage on the wages of iniquity. I was assured, by a creditable person, that even within the enclosure of the large mosque, and in close vicinity to the reverend saint, are several rooms occupied by hardened and abandoned women, worthy associates of the chaste and immaculate daughter of Imam Reeza.

It is pleasant and cheering to turn from this painful and gloomy picture to the few Jews who, in the midst of this godless and moral wilderness, still cling with faith and hope to Him who delivered them out of the bondage of the Pharaohs, and who will in His own good time emancipate them from the iron yoke of their present oppressors.

The few who are allowed to reside here come from Koshan and Ispahan, and the ostentatious vocation which they pursue is peddling ; but as the pious, who live in the religious atmosphere of so many descendants of the Prophet, would be shocked at the idea of touching anything that has passed the hands of a defiled and impure Jew, they have had recourse to a more profitable traffic, the sale of spirituous liquors, in which I was told the haughty and grave mullahs greatly encourage them.

During our short stay we formed the personal acquaintance of Hakim Aaron, the best informed and most respectable Jew we had met with in Persia; he spoke to us a considerable time on the subject of Christianity, and from his conversation we could see that the scales had fallen from his eyes, and that he had read with profit the books we sent him from Hamadan. The other Jews whom we saw were poor and ignorant, they spoke with bitter vehemence against the Mahomedans, and with yearning solicitude longed for the advent of the Redeemer, not to establish peace and righteousness on the earth, but in order

that he might revenge their wrongs and exterminate the kingdoms of the Gentiles. We gave to our friend, the Hakim, and also to the rest, tracts, and a few New Testaments, which, as I found subsequently, were not read in vain.

*March 24th.*—Before we proceeded I made a circuit round the town to inspect the monuments of the dead, and the various localities inhabited by the living, but everything I saw indicated extreme neglect, and utter abandonment to ruin and decay. Even the few stately edifices, which former piety raised to the memory of Imam Zadehs, are crumbling into pieces, and from their dilapidated condition render a near approach to them dangerous. The mean and wretched appearance of the place is increased by the filth and dirt which encumber the narrow unpaved streets, and I was glad to leave the city of saints and profligates, sepulchres and ruins, to enjoy again the cheering sight of green fields, and to breathe the free and untainted air of heaven.

The route from this to the capital leads over a thirsty barren desert, a part of which extends through a succession of dismal glens and undulating acclivities, not inappropriately called the "Valley of the Shadow of Death,"—Malek-el-Mout,—and the name we found to be only a faint emblem of the blight and loneliness of the place. On our approach to the royal city the prospect became a little diversified, and the extensive plain, chequered and dotted by villages, gardens and fields, relieved the eye that had for many wearisome hours wandered over the lifeless howling waste, and indicated the guardian care which is extended to the industrious peasant and toiling husbandman in the immediate vicinity of royalty.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### LODGINGS IN A STRANGE TOWN NOT EASILY FOUND.

THE arrival in a strange town, and in a place where civilization has not yet provided for the traveller's convenience the luxury of a clean lodging, or comfortable inn,—the pleasure which the anticipation of rest after toil is calculated to excite, becomes frequently chilled by the troubles occasioned in the search of a temporary abode. We had experienced such difficulties before, and, to provide against a similar contingency in the city of Shah-in-Shah,\* sent a servant in advance, to secure us a home for a few days, in the Armenian quarter. His mission, however, proved a failure, and we had to content ourselves with a dark and dirty cell, in a noisy, buzzing caravanserai.

Our exposed and public lodging was not a very eligible place for inviting the Jews; and we, therefore, as usual, availed ourselves of the synagogue, to make known the glad tidings of life and immortality revealed in the Gospel. Our message of mercy, however, did not meet with such a favourable reception here as in other places; the minds of the Jews were full of prejudice, and their hearts impervious to every better impression. Those who could not close their eyes and shut their ears against the incontrovertible and important truths which we set before them, had recourse to rabbinical vagaries and quibbles; or they would say, "If Jesus is the Messiah, why are we still in bondage, and why is the heritage of our fathers in the possession of our cruel oppressors?" To such queries our general reply was, "God has driven you from your country, on account of your sins; repent and believe in the Messiah, and you will regain the forfeited favour, and become heirs of everlasting glory!" The gracious declaration of divine love, though listened to by the majority with incredulity and unconcern, affected the hearts

\* King of Kings, one of the numerous titles which the Persian sovereigns arrogate to themselves.

of several who had not felt in vain the correction of God's rod, nor experienced his just chastisements without profit. These individuals belonged to the synagogue at Meshed, where, in 1838, blind bigotry and ferocious zeal annihilated in a few hours the whole of the Jewish community. Those who saved themselves by flight were exposed to the greatest privations and sufferings on the way, and to indigence and destitution wherever they settled. It was a pleasure to speak with men into whose hearts the iron had indeed entered, and taught them the vanity and emptiness of all that does not lead to God and heaven. We spent many hours with them, in serious conversation on their future state; they had evidently lost all confidence in their own system of belief, and the wrath of heaven may yet bring them, in deep penitence, to the fountain of all joy and happiness, even to Him who alone can "guide their feet into the way of peace."

*March 29th.*—The Lord's-day, in the caravanserai, was like every other day, ushered in with curses and imprecations, tumultuous clamours, and lewd songs. Frequently, in my itinerant wanderings, when I spent the Sabbath in a secluded vale, or in an unfrequented grove,—where the solemn stillness of nature, the soothing breath of fragrant herbs and weeds, the murmuring sound of silvery rills, the mellow notes of birds, and thousands of other beauties above and around me, filled the heart with reverence and the tongue with praise,—I enjoyed a most refreshing and delightful season of rest, to which I shall always look back with feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. Such spiritual communion and converse with God, the din and turmoil of the place we lived in did not permit us to realize, for even the voice of prayer and thanksgiving was drowned in the oaths and fiendish expressions which continually re-echoed through the vaulted recesses of this crowded hospital.

The Persians, unlike the Turks, are a vivacious, gay, and volatile race; they think little, and talk much; and the traveller who is at all inclined for society, needs only to open the door of his lodging, and from morning till evening he will find himself surrounded by a set of lazy fops, who will suffocate him with the fumes of their *calecons*, and hammer his head with their loquacious rattle. In a private house such time-killers will not



dare to intrude without leave, but in a public caravanserai it is impossible to exclude them; and the best and most philosophical remedy against the evil, is passive submission to the annoyance. Soon after prayers, and a hurried, frugal breakfast, our neighbours, who on that score claimed great intimacy with us, favoured us with their countenance. One of them was a slave-dealer, who, with his human merchandise, occupied the rooms on our right; the other, a Polish Mahomedan Jew, and royal tailor, had his workshop on the left. Both were evidently ignorant of our vocation, faith, and country, or else they would have carefully avoided our acquaintance.

The barterer in human flesh was a tall, meagre, lizard-eyed Persian, and the hybrid Moslem tailor a mean, dark-haired hypocrite, who affected great devotion to his adopted creed, and bawled out every minute, "Yah Rasoul Allah!" (O Prophet of God!) I could not listen to such profane deception, and, prompted by the impulse of my feelings, pointedly asked him whether he preferred invoking Mahomed to the God of Israel? These few words, in Hebrew, had an electrifying effect upon him, and with a dubious shake of his head he inaudibly whispered, "I believe in God and the Messiah!" In the evening we had a serious conversation with him; he avowed that adverse and untoward circumstances had forced him to apostatize, and that he hoped, by his business, to gain sufficient money to leave Persia and settle in Palestine, where he would repent, give charity, and die a pious Jew. We gave him a few tracts, a Bible, and New Testament, for which he paid, with gratitude and many benedictions.

One other visitor was quite interested in the incident, and, with much curiosity, inquired what language we were speaking. The pseudo-Mahomedan, with an air of nonchalance, replied, "In zaboon Russ est!" (this is a Russian dialect!); by which he intended to convey the impression that we were Georgians, and believers in the Koran. Such falsehood, at our expense, we did not relish, and therefore flatly contradicted his statement. Our neighbour, who did not much appreciate the acquaintance with Gaours, and enemies to the trade in which he was engaged, still admired our candour, and gave us a good

deal of information on the abominable traffic in human flesh. His whole stock of property consisted of two African girls, of about seventeen, and a fine intelligent boy of eight years; they had the true ebony colour of their clime and race, and, from the merry laughs and gay frolics in which they indulged, appeared happy and content. Before our departure, he sold one of the women, and the separation between the two captive sisters was affecting and painful. For more than a quarter-of-an-hour both uttered the most awful screams, lamentations, sighs, and sobs, and then all was silent, and nothing but the smothered groans of anguish and despair were indistinctly heard through the thin wall, which had, only twenty-four hours before, brought to our ears the cheerful and joyous strains of two innocent bondmaids. The party who conducted the frightened and agonized African to her new home, were two cronies and a ferash, or policeman—a compliment to which every official of rank is entitled. The trader himself did not leave his cell, but in a sullen mood sat at his door, evidently ruffled in mind and temper, by the unpleasant and heartless duties imposed upon him by his avocation. I asked him whether he did not deprecate the business which he pursued. “It is *tukdeer* (fate), and we are all only instruments in the hands of God!” and patting affectionately the cheek of the weeping sable boy, inquired, in a jocular tone, “Is it not so, Hossein?”

During the wars with Georgia, the Persian slave market presented all the vile and guilty phases of this justly abhorred traffic. Wives and daughters, youth and beauty, were indiscriminately torn from their homes and friends, by brutal soldiers, and sold into irredeemable slavery. Many, it is true, became inmates of the rich and potent, where their graces and charms engaged the affections and won the favour of their lords; but thousands fell into the hands of mean and bigoted masters, who detested their infidel descent, and thought it a merit to embitter the hard lot of their languishing and wasting captives. Happily, the dreaded name of the Czar has put a stop to the barter in Christian blood, and no Persian will have the audacity to kidnap or purchase a Georgian woman. The wronged and injured Africans are the only slaves now imported;

they are sold privately, and not in the public bazaar ; and, though treated with humanity and indulgence, are conscious of the cruelty and indignity of their position, and with a dogged resignation, submit to a degrading and greivous bondage.

There is another kind of slaves in Persia, to whose misery and wretchedness a morbid fancy has so long reconciled our feelings, that we cannot pity or compassionate the hard lot of the unhappy beings, who if left to their own choice no doubt would frequently change their position with the black Nubian and sallow Mulatto.

But, whatever charms romance may weave around the prison chambers of an Eastern harem, and its costly-robed inmates, few spots on earth conceal more malignant passions, impure cravings, and dark crimes, than these pleasure houses of an oriental voluptuary. In Turkey the Ulemas afford a faint shadow of protection to the weaker sex, and marriages and divorces require a legal sanction ; but in Persia, where licentiousness and gross sensuality prevail to a frightful extent among all classes, a woman is the property of one man to-day, and the sport of another to-morrow. The law allows marriages *pro tempore*, and many of the mullahs gain their subsistence by negotiating these nefarious contracts. Such revolting ties naturally engender the spirit of immorality and profligacy, and have, as might be anticipated, proved a bane to females in general, and made those whom God ordained to be help-meets, the common prey of lewdness and infamy.

In the harems of the rich and affluent, where the vitiated senses seek continual gratification in the external witcheries of transient beauty and fading bloom, the degraded woman, so long as her charms last, enjoys the ephemeral favour and precarious preference of her lordly debauchee, and then, like those who have preceded her, she is consigned to oblivion, and must yield her place to another to share the same fate. Many of these truly pitiable beings, who have neither education nor mental culture to beguile the sorrowful hours of their monotonous and wearisome existence, seek solace for their desolate hearts in the bosom of guilt, or they induce their unfeeling

keeper to divorce them,\* and then, body and soul, they surrender themselves to a profligate mullah, or an old match-making reprobate woman, who endeavours to supply these deserted hours with companions easier pleased than the big lord, who can afford to procure those inductive and personal perfections which the less wealthy dare only envy. Some of the nobility are, however, very reluctant to part with women who once awakened in their hearts sentiments of tenderness and love; and, consequently, these cast-off objects of former affection are still retained in the harems, as domestic drudges to those who act as the sultanas of the day. Should, however, misfortune, or any other unfavourable incident, reduce the income of a great man, (and under a despotic sway nothing is more common,) to what an abyss of sin and crime are not the debased, corrupted and untutored objects of his indulgence driven, in order to gain a penurious subsistence for themselves, and not unfrequently for their merciless masters.

I have heard of princes, and other individuals with pompous titles, who (if it but replenished their purses and prevented pecuniary embarrassments) connive at the seduction and dishonour of their own sisters and relations; and often, too often, men who call themselves Christians, and who have been taught from infancy the sublime, moral and elevating doctrines of the Gospel, participate and encourage this awful and revolting sin. The European residents in Persia, who ought to bring the whole battery of their influence and authority against such fearful pollutions, have with a few solitary exceptions, imitated the practices of the natives, and elicited some notoriety, even from the greatest men in the land.† The com-

\* Many a Persian nobleman will not, unless compelled by circumstances, divorce one of his wives or concubines, as such an act would cause suspicion, and reflect upon his character and position; but he may give her away as a present, or transfer her to a menial.

† Meerza Jagher Khan, the unfortunate and much lamented minister of the present king, in a conversation with a person of rank, who presented a petition from the Jews in Hamadan, said: "I have long watched and observed the character of all classes of our subjects, and my opinion is, that the Moslems are incorrigible reprobates, the Ghebus industrious tradesmen, the

panions of their guilt are sometimes Mahomedans, or, as is more generally the case, Armenians ; for a connexion with the former now and then excites the cupidity of a dissolute mullah, who might, unless his lips are closed by a handsome douccur, (which is not always convenient for these gentlemen,) expose the infidel Gaour, who has criminal intercourse with the daughter of a Moslem, even in corrupt Persia, where such irregularities are sometimes so dangerous and serious in their consequences.

I could enumerate many instances, (but refrain from allowing details of this kind to stain these pages, and revolt against my own and the feelings of my respected readers,) to show the contempt, scorn, and disrepute, which such unrestrained scandal brings upon the religion we profess. The Mahomedan who is educated, and the Jew who has read the Gospel, know well enough that the religion of Jesus does not sanction licentiousness ; but the majority, who form their opinion of our faith from the conduct of its professors, with some plausibility believe, that profligacy and sinful indulgence constitute part of our creed. I have heard men of high rank, with whom I became incidentally acquainted, say, that they were Englishmen, or Franghees, and upon inquiring why they thought so, the reply was, "We eat pork, drink wine, revel in all sorts of debauchery, and live in fact only for time, without ever troubling our heads about eternity." In a few instances the misconduct of Europeans, particularly Englishmen, involved me in serious altercations with Armenian priests, who imagining that as a clergyman I possessed the same influence as themselves among their people, pressinglly importuned me to intercede for certain women, who had been robbed of their innocence and abandoned with their illegitimate offspring by the men, the nominal Christian men, who by promises gained their persons, and ruined them for all the useful purposes of this life, and, alas! too frequently, for all the glory and bliss of the world to come. Such applications were not only painful, as I was obliged to refuse all conversation and discussion on subjects of this nature, but they conveyed

Jews arrant cheats, and the Christians, including all of that denomination, profligate sensualists." Mulla Eliyahu, in Hamadan, who was present, related this to me.

the erroneous impression that I abetted, by my non-interference, the shameless acts of those who professed themselves to be in every respect superior to the natives, whom they treat with indignity, and teach lessons of immorality by their example. Should these pages meet the eye of those, who, from year to year by flattering promises induce sordid mothers to sell their innocent daughters to sin and crime,—let them remember, that a day of retribution is approaching, and that the cries of their abandoned offspring against the beings who gave them existence, will not pierce the vault of heaven in vain. But I will draw the curtain over these and other revolting corruptions which stain Persia, and shew how the afflicted remnant of Israel still groan under all the accumulated miseries and woes, which a licentious and cruel populace can inflict upon them. The proximity to royalty one should suppose would afford them some shelter and protection, and secure their persons and property from the malevolent designs of the base, and the rapacity of the wicked; that such is not the case, the appearance of the Jews is the most tangible proof. In passing through the streets, bazaars, lanes or alleys, where you meet with people of all ranks and in every Eastern garb,—amongst this motley variety, which parade the thoroughfares of this large town, it is impossible not to distinguish the ground-down Jew. His ragged and filthy dress, his cadaverous and haggard look, are unmistakable characteristics. The curse, which has pursued him for ages, is still legible in his bended gait and tattered apparel. In Arabia and Asiatic Turkey, where the name Yehudi implies everything that is despicable and odious, his position, compared with that of his brethren in Persia, is still easy and happy. He can at least trade and amass money; and though he does not openly parade his wealth and expose it to the eyes of the marauding and rapacious Mussulman, he still secretly derives comfort and pleasure from the consciousness of its possession. But the Persian Jew is allowed no such privileges; despised and trodden down, he lingers out day after day in anguish and care, and at last droops under the burden of accumulated misery, doubtful even whether his bones will rest in peace, and be permitted to mingle their mouldering ashes with the clods out of which they were formed.

In visiting their quarter I frequently witnessed the most heartless scenes of oppression and wanton cruelty, which these people patiently suffer from their Mahomedan task-masters, without resistance or remonstrance. Now and then, the smothered feeling of revenge and vindictiveness, which has long been rankling in the heart, will burst forth and vent itself on the first Moslem whom he encounters in a narrow and dark lane. Sometimes such assaults attract people from a neighbouring street, and the Jew, in order to avoid the punishment which his temerity would draw upon him, immediately raises the most pitiable cries, and to avoid all suspicion, inflicts a serious wound on himself; and then, covered with blood and dirt, excites either ridicule or compassion, as the gazers are disposed towards him, and escapes the consequences in which so grave an offence might involve him and his people. On one occasion, in passing a narrow street in the Jewish quarter, I heard the most distressing shrieks, and, on hastening to the spot, found a Jew and a Moslem engaged in a severe physical conflict. I instantly called upon the Jew to desist, but he, supposing that I warned him of the approach of people, dashed his hands in his mouth, bit upon his fingers, and, bleeding profusely, threw himself upon the wet and dirty stones, mimicing all the contortions and agonies of an injured, afflicted, and maltreated man. When the individuals whom his groans and noise had attracted, dispersed, he got up, and with a feigned, feeble step, as if afraid of being noticed, trudged on to his home. I asked him why he had caused himself pain and assaulted another, perhaps an innocent, person. "Oh!" sobbed he, whilst the tears rolled down his whitening beard, "you don't know what it is to be continually reviled, abused, and buffeted by these cursed Ishmaelites. One of my brothers has already been compelled to abjure the holy faith of Israel; my own life has been several times in danger; and if I die to-morrow, what security have I that my son will be allowed to say *kaddeish* for the soul of his parent? May not the Amalekites drag him every moment to their heathen temple, and, through some false charges, immolate him, a sacrifice to their cursed Moloch?" "And will such revenge avert the dreaded calamity?" "No; yet it is a relief to smite one of the cursed

Egyptians, who make us drink the bitter cup of slavery to the very dregs, and then exult in our calamity and degradation."

This feeling of burning hatred, which, like a consuming cancer-worm, gnaws on the vitals of the Jew, is not attributable to his education, but to the extraordinary position he occupies; for, is he not subject to the worst tyranny? is not his life perpetually imperilled? and does he not share, in common with all men, the feelings in which the wronged and injured generally indulge? He is not only held in derision and contempt, but he cannot follow those pursuits which, even in the most blood-steeped period of his history, afforded him the feigned favour and protection of the potent against the encroachments and assaults of the rapacious and weak. The wily Persian has provided a remedy against such an ascendancy, by stopping every channel through which wealth can flow into the hands of the cunning and industrious Jew. Religious bigotry and implacable hate declare him morally defiled and impure; this debars him from all commercial enterprise, prevents him from engaging in any lawful traffic, and consigns him to the most abject want and despicable occupations. In many towns he dare not, without imminent peril, frequent even the public bazaar; and when it rains, nothing but sheer necessity will drive him into the streets, for he might accidentally splash a believer with a little mud, or water, and so bring upon his devoted head curses and ill-treatment. Many, many times have I seen the sallow, care-worn Israelite creeping along the loathsome, contaminating thoroughfares—where famished and disgusting curs wallowed in the filth and dirt which for months had accumulated—with a guarded and careful step, quite affecting and painful to witness. Under all these humiliations and hardships, which crush his intellect, destroy his frame, and force him to the basest and most repugnant trades, can we feel astonished that he should pant for revenge, and feast his lacerated heart with the visionary hope of future retribution and retaliation.

That the Elamite Jew is susceptible of kindness, I can fully attest; circumstances and his position have engendered in him vices, for which he is more to be pitied than blamed; but, only prove that you love and esteem him, and that, like the great



Saviour of mankind, you weep over his desolation, and commiserate his unhappy fate,—and his soul will melt and soften under your words, like wax under the rays of a burning sun. My intercourse with them in the capital, and other cities, strikingly exemplifies this. On our first visit to the metropolis, we met with a cold and indifferent welcome, and all we said was listened to with impatience and sullen apathy. The second time I was in Teheran, our object was known, and our motives understood, all suspicion had vanished, and the best feeling supplanted its place. Rich and poor invited me to their homes and synagogues, and one whole Saturday I spent in the house of the late king's Jewish physician, and his brother Moshe, where many of the mullahs had received invitations to meet me; and at my departure all fell round my neck, and, under showers of unaffected prayers, good wishes, and expressions of eternal friendship, they imprinted on me the kiss of brotherhood and esteem.

The number of Jews inhabiting the royal city may be estimated at three hundred families; they occupy a separate quarter, which is distinguished by the stagnant vapours, which rise from the heaps of offal deposited there by their kind neighbours. The appearance of the houses correspond with the uncouth aspect of the locality—low, confined, unwholesome, and dilapidated; with doors so small, that any one who enters must be well practised in the art of stooping and crawling, or else he runs the risk of breaking his head, or bruising his limbs. The dwelling of the physician already referred to, and those of some of the mullahs, are better and larger; a favour for which they are indebted to the credulity of the late king, who, in order to arrest the progress of the gout, had frequent recourse to the magic powers of these disciples of the celestial Rasiel, for which he liberally rewarded them. Mullah Rachmim, on one occasion, actually performed over the royal head the ceremony of *Caporath*,\* and

\* On the morning preceding the Day of Atonement, all orthodox Jews take a hen for a female, and a cock for a male, and, whilst pronouncing a certain prayer, whirl it three times round the head of each individual, and by so doing, confess their own guilt, and cheat Satan of the opportunity to accuse them before God.

another rabbi, after a long preparation, by fasting, lavations, and other purifications, produced a most wonderful amulet, which the king wore round his arm for a considerable time.

This credulity in the preternatural powers of the Jews, often gains them a powerful friend and protector. The worst of this is, that the science is degenerating, and what before was a monopoly of the learned Jew, has become the staple business of the mass. In every village and hamlet a bearded necromancer is to be seen once in the week, who, 'for a few *pools*, will satiate the most voracious applicant with his wonder-working skill. I have heard many Jews condemn these nefarious and fraudulent practices; but what is the poor outcast to do? cut off from every means of gaining an honest livelihood, debarred from all intercourse with his fellow-men, doomed to every mortification and mockery, how is he to live; and how is he to struggle against want, poverty, and starvation? He must stoop to the most repugnant pursuits, and unwillingly become the crafty, sordid, proverbial Jew.

The vices of the Jews, amidst all their degradation, persecution, and oppression, sink however into nothing, when compared with the crimes which stain those who hold them in abject servitude, and make it a merit to treat them with indignity. Sheeraz and Ispahan are notorious for profligacy, dissoluteness, and intemperance; but the capital has the infamous celebrity of excelling both. The heart, in fact, sickens, and the mind recoils at the idea of dilating on the gross sins and crimes which all classes speak of without disguise, and perpetrate without remorse. They seem to have an utter contempt for all moral decencies, and actually glory in their shame. The unbounded indulgence which the Koran extends to its votaries, has greatly contributed to, if not entirely produced, this loathsome degeneracy and pollution. The Persians are naturally a voluptuous and sensual race, and a religion which feeds rather than deadens every profligate and licentious taste, upon such an excitable soil, must open the door to the most flagitious gratifications and disgusting excesses.

This brief sketch is an index to their whole life: they have

many redeeming qualities, which, if fully developed, might soon improve their general character, and regenerate their country. But it is not the religion of the Arabian prophet that can effect this reformation ; the renewing, ennobling, and sanctifying influence of the Gospel, in God's own appointed time, must achieve this glorious work. I have heard persons of rank and station deprecate their creed and its prejudicial influence ; they knew what their country was under the Mythratic kings, and deplored the condition to which Mahomedanism had reduced it.

The Persians are not like the Turks, an unthinking phlegmatic race ; on the contrary, they are the same to-day as they were when Xenophon depicted their character in the person of Cyrus,—lively, robust, imitative and sagacious ; all they require to purify them from their vices, emancipate them from all degrading prejudices and superstitions, and make them the most civilized, intelligent, and influential people in central Asia, is the influence of the religion of Jesus Christ. During my various visits to the capital, and other places, I made this frequently the subject of conversation, whenever I came in contact with the great and potent ; and almost invariably my statements found an echo in their own views. The last time I was in Teheran, I visited the government schools, which under the ill-fated Taghee Khan, late prime-minister, had been established, and which continue to enjoy the favour and support of the Shah, and I was quite amazed at the proficiency to which the children had attained, in so short a period, in many branches of European education. I confess that I considered it quite a happy and auspicious omen, to see a parcel of boys, just emerging out of a state bordering on semi-barbarism, plodding over their French spelling-books, or gazing on various scientific instruments with a yearning eye after knowledge, which hopefully directed my vision to that happy period, when the tide of light and truth shall roll on uninterrupted, and sweep away all the fatal errors and delusions which have so long enslaved the Eastern mind and intellect.

Before leaving the seat of royalty, it might be expected that I should allude to the pomp and splendour of the city of the

Shah-in-Shah ; but a description of the Persian capital will not impress the reader with a very lively idea of Eastern magnificence and wealth.

Teheran is situated at the extremity of a parched plain, close to the lofty range of mountains which separate Iran from Mazmederan, a region renowned in ancient history for its heroes and warriors. It first rose in importance towards the end of the last century, when Agha Mahomed Khan, a cruel, capricious king, selected it as the metropolis of his empire. Before this period, Ispahan and Sheeraz had enjoyed the precarious favour, but the politic tyrant who overthrew the throne and power of the Zund family, did not venture to establish the seat of his government amidst a people on whom he had perpetrated the most barbarous and repugnant atrocities ; he therefore resolved to make the royal abode near his own tribe, the Cudgar, on whom he could, in any emergency, depend for aid and support. The central position of the spot happily favoured the precocious despot ; and whilst the elegant and deservedly praised capital of the proud Seffervean monarchs is declining in wealth, and hastening to decay, this modern city, (in the midst of a swamp caused by the numerous mountain torrents, and for six months in the year as dangerous as a fever hospital,) is increasing in population, fame, and riches. The place presents, in its external and internal aspect, nothing worthy of admiration or note ; the streets are narrow, unpaved, filthy, and full of holes ; the bazaars, with the exception of the one lately built by the maligned, prime-minister, low, dark, wretched, and miserable, and the mosques mean, insignificant and devoid of all beauty and architectural elegance. The only edifice of consequence is the Ark, or royal palace,—an unsightly gloomy building, consisting of so many detached courts, gardens, and halls, all enclosed by separate lofty walls, that the visitor is at once impressed with the idea that the architect had his eye entirely upon the honour of the royal harem ; and in order to retain inviolate the fidelity of the encaged fairies, he closed, in his zeal, every avenue and prospect, and with it efficiently excluded also every breath of air, the greatest luxury in a hot and sultry climate. During the encampment of the court at the summer retreat, near the base

of the mountains, I obtained permission to inspect the royal domains. My guide, a person attached to the palace, and an accomplished, volatile Persian, conducted me to the various halls and chambers, which he thought would best convey a correct notion of the power, greatness and riches of the great king. The first building we entered, contained the numerous presents which European powers had from time to time sent to propitiate the favour of successive Shahs. Many were paltry trifling things, in the shape of mirrors, vases, vinaigrettes, artificial flowers, &c.; others consisted of clocks, trays, a glass fountain, and a bedstead of the same material, a present I believe from the Czar of the North. Most of these articles were, however, broken, dirty, rusty, or out of repair, and would scarcely be deemed worthy to occupy a place in the window of any broker's shop in Oxford Street, or on the Boulevard. We next proceeded to the saloon, or throne chamber; this is a spacious lofty hall, facing a garden animated with *jets d'eau*, and interspersed with beds of tufting flowers, and rows of shady waving poplars. Two sentinels, in ragged uniforms and without shoes, were sleeping at the entrance, and the vacant, beautiful, white marble throne was occupied by two rough, dusty and muddy-faced servants, who looked upon me with a frowning, withering gaze, as if they would devour me for having disturbed their siesta. From the large audience and festive halls, we made our way through a labyrinth of gardens, courts and passages, to many other distinguished parts of these extensive premises; but my conductor would not allow me to linger anywhere, except in the picture gallery, this he considered a place worthy the close and leisurely inspection of a Frank, and of course a son of the muses. The order in which these productions of art were arranged, was most ludicrous. Portraits, landscapes, historical and poetical paintings, interspersed with penny valentines, caricature prints, and daubed figures of griffins and genii, all in one motley confusion, hung on the walls. A number of obscene and licentious paintings stood in an adjacent room, but they were of such a gross, disgusting character, that I retreated with horror from the abominable sight. The Guleshan, or bed of roses, the secluded dwellings of the youth, bloom and beauty

of Persia, I did not see; my guide intimated that, as there was not a female soul on the spot, I might by giving one of the guards a present, obtain a view of the interior, but I had no wish to trespass on this interdicted ground, and quite content with what I had seen, gave a *baksheesh* to my courteous conductor, and made my exit from the home of royalty.

My subsequent missionary tours comprised the whole of Azerbejan, the Eastern province of Coordistan, and those interesting tracts which divide the sun-scorched plains of Assyria from the picturesque valleys of Media, but as a detailed description of these historic and untried missionary scenes, would greatly swell the size, and increase the expense of this work, I must postpone it for the present, and conclude this volume with a journey to Mosul, Amedia, Asheetha, (the arena of Bauber Khan Bey's atrocities,) and a short account of a recent visit to Persia, and Mozooderan.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### DAWNINGS OF LIGHT APPEARING.

THE country assigned to us as our sphere of labour, is not only one of deep historic and antiquarian interest, but it is also one of those numerous melancholy spots on this wide surface, which demonstrates the dire effects of sin, and the judgments of God, on the disobedient. According to Assemani, and other authentic sources, the plain of Babylon and the mountains and vales of Assyria, which at present are enveloped in darkness that can be felt, once rung with the strains of the son of Jesse, and were filled with the choral melody of thousands and myriads of worshipping Christians. But the missionary, whilst he now and then heaves a sigh over the wreck and desolation of the past, must look with faith and hope to the accomplishment of the glowing prophecies which loom in the future, and thank God the way of truth is rapidly preparing, and light and knowledge agitating the stagnant waters of ignorance, delusion and unbelief. The Jew in Asia, who for ages clung with pertinacity to every falsehood, and blindly trusted in the most senseless and fabulous inventions of man, is now beginning to lose all confidence in the shadows which rabbinism reared, to lull them into a never-to-be-realized, yet always anticipated, dream of happiness. The Gospel has opened his eyes, subdued his prejudices, and mitigated the spirit of intolerant bigotry, which hitherto characterized this uncared for, and secluded remnant of a most mystic race. Much of the seed sown, both in Persia, and, as the following pages will show, in Asiatic Turkey, has no doubt fallen on good ground, and will in God's own appointed time raise up, not only one Thomas and Thaddeus, to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom, but a whole host of converted Israelites, who in the spirit of their pro-

totypes, the apostles, will labour and toil for the regeneration of this primeval abode of man. But I must proceed with my journey, and not apostrophize on the results which the infallible Word of God warrants us to anticipate.

On the evening of September 9th, our caravan, consisting of several hundred mules, horses and donkeys, emerged out of the Maidan Gate of Bagdad. The night, after the oppressive and feverish heat of the day, was soft and refreshing, and the towering arrowy branches of the trees, as they waved over our heads, breathed animation in our numerous cavalcade. The gaiety and hilarity lasted as long as we treaded our path through the groves and forests which line the banks of the Tigris, but no sooner did this pleasant scene recede from our view, and the desert, with all its imaginary horrors, extend its vast and blasted expanse beyond the ken of mortal eye, than the lively song and romantic tale ceased, and both Turks, Arabs, Jews, and Gaours, had recourse to the solacing *chibauke*, to dispel the *ennui*, sleep, and monotony of the nocturnal journey.

The desert, which even at the most favourable season, when its burnt-up surface is decked with a verdant carpet, and enamelled with myriads of wild flowers, is an unattractive region, in summer becomes a most frightful and forbidding desolation; not a blade of grass remains unwithered, not a brook that is not dried up; all animal and vegetable life seems extinct, and the wayfarer treads with horror on the broken and pulverized soil, which glows and burns beneath his very steps. To travel in such regions of death and gloom exhausts the patience and endurance of the most phlegmatic and elastic constitution.

I had, by practice, become inured to fatiguing and toilsome journeys, yet an uninterrupted march of twelve hours, over a desert which exhaled fiery vapours from its inmost bowels, made me, like all the rest, long for the place which would terminate the toil of the stage. At eight o'clock we reached the impatiently looked-for spot, and encamped for the day. Thermometer, under an awning, 9, A.M., 118°, 1, P.M., 120°.

At five o'clock, P.M., we started again. The burning rays of the sun had so enervated me that I could scarcely retain my seat on horseback. In the evening I formed the acquaintance



of several Bagdad Jews, who were travelling in the same caravan. They expressed themselves quite delighted to have me as a companion, and immediately proposed that we should form the van, in order not to be suffocated by the heated dust, which rose in thick clouds wherever the *cafilah* marched. I gladly acceded to this proposition, and we rode along conversing and meditating on the grand provision which the Gospel of Christ had made for helpless, poor, and ruined sinners. The quiet night, soft air, azure sky, and full moon, tended to fill the heart with devotion, and impress the mind with the truth of those doctrines which I endeavoured to communicate to my fellow-pilgrims.

At four in the morning we halted, on the river *Diala*, and I slept undisturbed on its sunburnt banks, until the sun's scorching rays roused me from my refreshing rest. During the day-time the atmosphere was like the blaze of a glowing furnace. I was in a most distressing fever, and one of my servants seriously ill. My Jewish friends sympathized with me, and were astonished that I had not provided myself with a tent, like other Europeans when they travelled in this country. Towards sunset I read the 121st Psalm, the precious promises contained in it were peculiarly applicable and consoling in my situation, the Jews read it over and over again, and repeatedly observed that the most pious *rabbi* could not have made choice of a part of Scripture more suited to our circumstances.

Before night we mounted again. We passed several canals which the heat had completely broken up and exhausted. At dawn we reached *Deli Abbas*, a small village inhabited by a few Arabs, and dismounted in the open plain. Thermometer, at noon, 114°.

The next stage being thirteen hours, we were obliged to mount before sunset. Our course was northerly, across the *Hamrin* hills, an insignificant range of mountains. During the night I had a long conversation with *Ezra*, one of the Jewish travellers. He appeared a quiet humble man, and every word I spoke, and every passage of Scripture I quoted, came home to his heart, and penetrated his soul; and before we reached our encampment, he was led to exclaim, "What shall I do."

After sunrise I went to Kara Tefeh, a large village with a bazaar, and visited the few Jewish families who resided in it. They all live in one enclosure, and as I was already known to them by report, I had no great difficulty in introducing the subject of religion. I endeavoured, in my intercourse with them, to convince them of their own depravity and sinfulness, and so lead them to Christ for pardon and salvation.

One poor man, who had met with a fearful accident, and who was stretched out on a thin carpet, from which I fear he never rose again, attracted my chief notice. I could not help addressing myself to him, as to a man who would soon enter the gates of eternity, and so spoke to him without any reserve. He listened to all I said with a motionless gaze, and only occasionally expressed the anguish of his soul by a deep groan, or a convulsive sigh. His wife and children, who stood near, were bathed in tears; and there were few of the Jews who were not affected. When I was about to retire, he turned towards me with an anxious look, and uttered some incoherent words. I told him that he must trust in the atoning blood of Christ, which was shed for his and my sins, and God would give him the victory over death and the grave.

The same evening we left for Kifri, and in the morning dismounted close to the walls of the town. Kifri was formerly an extensive place, but like the whole of this country, oppression and tyranny have lessened the population, and diminished its importance. It contains, at present, one hundred and fifty houses, of which fifteen are inhabited by Jews.

I visited their synagogue, which is a neat little room, and had a lengthened discussion with the teacher and nine other Jews. They were exceedingly ignorant, and their hearts entirely devoted to the objects of gain. In the market-place I had another conversation with a few Jews; who were rather inquisitive, and wistfully inquired why I was travelling about. I answered their query, by telling them that I pitied their miserable and lost condition, and came to preach to them that salvation which would roll away the dreadful curse which rested upon their nation, free them from the dominion of sin, and make them partakers of all the blessings which, in the

blood of the Lamb, are freely offered to every penitent son of Adam.

They stared at me with an unconscious indifference, and did not make any reply. In going away towards the encampment, they called Ezra, who accompanied me, and in great amazement told him that I spoke rationally and feelingly, and that the Bagdad rabbies had grossly misrepresented me. The following evening we left for Touz Khormaton, the place Ezra intended to visit; he expressed great regret at our separation, and consoled himself with the hope of my speedy return.

Past midnight we reached Touz Khormaton, and whilst unloading, an incident occurred which involved my muleteer and servant in a serious quarrel with a party of untamed Nizams, and their barbarous savage officers. The latter, with the impudence and insolence for which these personages are infamous, insisted that my muleteer should evacuate the place on which he had encamped, as they wanted it for themselves. He told them that their request was unreasonable, and that God had given him the same claim to the spot as any one else. The untutored officer felt himself offended at the temerity of the *catargee*, and to put an end to all parleying, gave him a knock with the handle of his rusty sword, which brought the poor man to the ground. My servant and others immediately rushed to the rescue, and the *melée* became general. I was in the midst of the combatants, endeavouring, by the use of my hands and the dint of all the eloquence I could command, to calm the roused passions. It was, however, all in vain, the grim-looking officer and his ragged companions wanted a butt for their disappointment and vengeance, and as a Gaour was the proper object, like vultures round a carcase, they encompassed my servant, and threatened to *bastinado* him till he should no more be able to distinguish night from day. Fortunately I had a *boyourvulton*, or firman, from the Pasha, this I instantly produced, and the sight of the large official seal (for none of them could read) palsied the arm of the assailants, and with ferocious grins, and smothered imprecations on the Gaours, they desisted from further violence. In the morning I called on the military chief of the district, and informed him of the unpleasant incident which had taken place

in the night. He ordered the assailants before him, and after overwhelming them with a shower of curses and oaths, kicked them with the heels of his slippers out of the tent. He apologized to me, and said that he regretted he could not inflict a more summary punishment, as the troops were disciplined *a la Franca*, and enjoyed more liberty than under the good old regulations. Touz Khormaton was, before the great plague in 1831, a town of considerable extent, but this unsparing scourge so reduced the number of its inhabitants, that it is now a scattered village, with a population of one thousand Moslems, and sixty Jews. I visited their synagogue, which is a spacious decaying building. The teacher was sitting at the entrance with a few children; he invited me to a seat near him, which I gladly accepted. I then opened my Bible, and read Isaiah lv. 1, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the water, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." He inquired to what this passage referred. I replied, to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose mercies are freely offered to every one who feels the burden of his sins, and desires to be washed in the fountain open for sin and uncleanness.

"The law of Moses was instituted to expiate sin."

"But since you can no longer satisfy the Deity by the sacrifice of the altar, you must have another substitute."

"We have prayers."

"The word of God declares, that it is the blood that maketh the atonement for the soul."

"And since we have, on account of our sins, neither temple, priest, nor altar, is the benevolence of God exhausted? and are there no means to rescue the sinner from final destruction?"

"Yes, there are; the seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head, is the balm which can heal our souls. It was this promise which comforted our first parents, and sustained our father Abraham in all his temptations and trials. This promise smoothed the dying pillow of Jacob, and made him exclaim, 'I waited for thy salvation, O Lord!' and this promise in the crucified Messiah, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, cheers the believer."

whether Jew or Gentile, 'in the life that now is,' and yields him the certain assurance of 'that which is to come.'"

He expressed himself greatly edified by my conversation, and added, "*Inshallah* (*i.e.*, please God), I shall visit Bagdad, and become better acquainted with you."

From the rabbi's house I went with Ezra, a Kerkouk Jew, and Eliyahu, to visit the sulphur hills in the neighbourhood, from the produce of which the place is entirely supported. On our return the caravan had already loaded, and I was obliged immediately to mount. Ezra was quite affected at leaving me, so that he could scarcely articulate the few parting blessings. I told him that I would write to Mr. Sternschuss, and he assured me that he would call on him the day he arrived in Bagdad. I believe this man is not far from the kingdom of heaven. At two o'clock, A.M., the caravan halted, and at one, P.M., we pursued our journey again, and reached Kerkouk at eleven o'clock in the evening.

All Eastern cities have something picturesque and illusive for the traveller, as he approaches them from the distance; the streaming rays of the sun, the castellated houses, the dense groves and orchards, the diversity of dresses and physiognomies, all are striking and pleasing to the mind. But the romance and beauty which a cloudless sky, and a bright shining orb throw around an Asiatic town, vanish by night; and instead of the hum and buz of big-turbaned heads, and floods of light from an azure sky, the traveller finds himself in the midst of packs of savage dogs, who are gnawing at a decomposed carcase, or burrowing for food among heaps of offal, without knowing, in the dense darkness, whether at the next step his horse may not stumble into some sink of filth, or roll into an open gutter.

Kerkouk gave me a full and fair insight of an Eastern city by night. At our entrance into the dark sooty bazaars, a chilling, sickening, and suffocating sensation stole over all my faculties. I felt it difficult to breathe, and even my horse was unwilling to snuff up the poisonous effluvia which enshrouded the whole place. The picture which my excited imagination formed of this town by night, I found

was not overdrawn by day. The bazaars, streets, and houses were all alike disgusting and abominable, and the Carduchoi without the Koran would certainly not have been more uncivilized and barbarous than they are with it. In the citadel, which is built on the summit of a mount, reside the Pasha, the government official, many respectable Moslems, and the whole community of Christians. It is as dirty and loathsome as the lower part of the town; every street has an uncovered sewer in its centre, which continually emits a most foetid and putrid stench, so that no civilized being can approach without offence to his olfactory nerves. The Pasha himself, whom I visited, complained of this insufferable nuisance, and I believe the purses of the natives had to expiate for their governor's dislike to his post.

As my stay was limited, I was anxious to make the best use of my time to form the acquaintance of the Jews. In the caravanserai, where I dismounted, they occupied several warehouses, and I accordingly went into one of these and sat down. Immediately a good number of the mercantile community collected around me, to whom I preached salvation through the blood of the Lamb. They asked me, why I did not adhere to the law of Moses? I replied, because it is impossible for me to fulfil all its requirements; and since the sacrifice of Christ obtained complete remission of all my sins, I have only by faith to rely on his atoning merits, and I am delivered from guilt and the consequences of sin. They asked me for New Testaments, which I willingly gave them.

Late in the afternoon I sent to Chacham Ezekiel, the chief rabbi, and informed him, that I should be happy to call on him; he inquired whether I was the same who visited the synagogues, and being answered in the affirmative, he hesitatingly consented. Towards evening I went to his house; he received me very coldly, and would not even return my salutation. After a few general questions, to which the rabbi replied in monosyllables, I broached the great subject of Messiah's first advent. He became very rude and boisterous, and by some disjointed and erroneous comments, attempted to disprove every word of Scripture, in favour of the question in debate. I

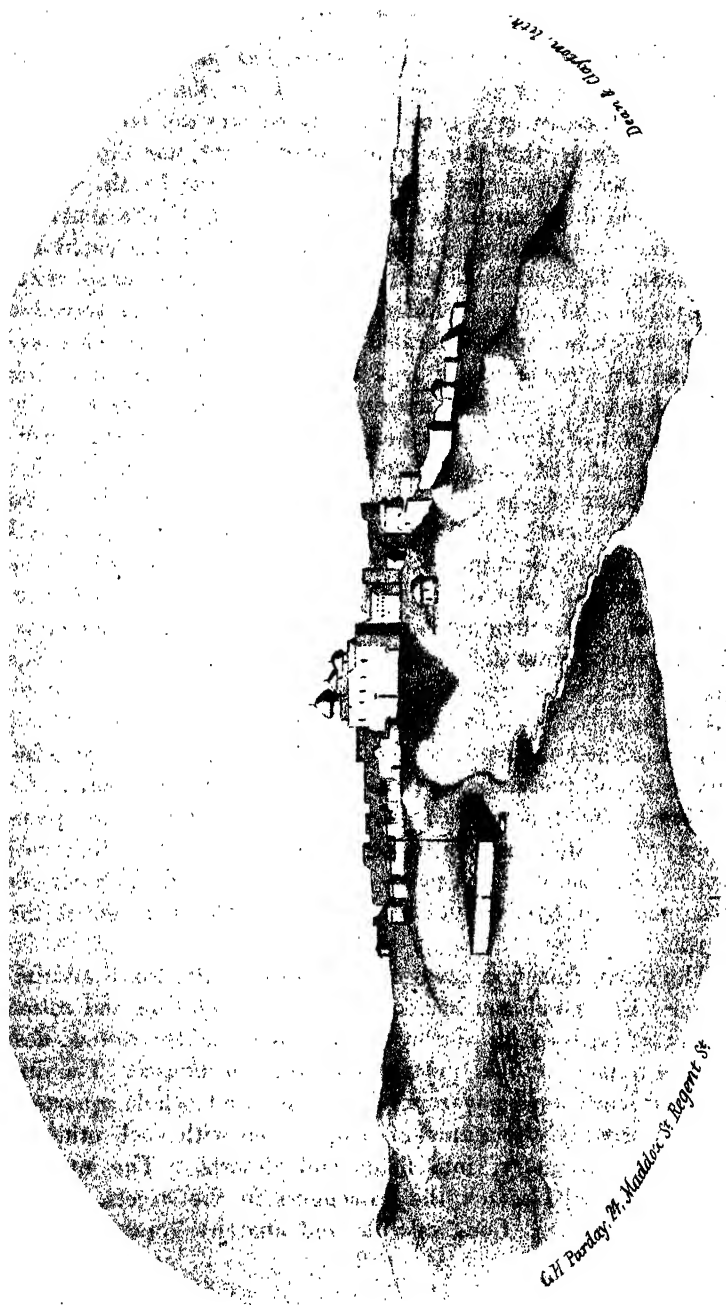
looked him sternly in the face and said, "It is in vain for you, to do violence to your own convictions, by thus perverting the truth of our Omnipotent God ; for now you may cling to your self-righteous doctrines, abuse the Gospel, and despise the preaching of the cross ; but, when the dark shadow of death hovers round your grey head, and a holy omniscient Judge summons your sinful soul, then you will not be so indifferent and regardless of the Redeemer, whom I proclaim to you." The old pharisaical rabbi (for he was already above three score) turned pale, and after a little reflection emerged into another equally fatal error, and asserted, that Messiah was only to reign, and not to suffer. I showed him that the prophets and many of the rabbies declared the reverse. He paused again, and then said : "The Lord is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sin." "And," added I with emphasis, "he will by no means clear the guilty." We parted amicably, though I fear my words did not make any impression upon him.

In the night we again resumed our journey. The desert had now disappeared, and the country assumed a more diversified and pleasing aspect ; to the north-east were the lofty mountains of Coordistan, and before us fertile and well cultivated plains. The four stages from this to Mosul are distinguished by many a memorable historic incident ; the first is Altenu Kepruie, or Golden Bridge, a town on an island in the Lesser Zab, which became conspicuous in the eventful career of the intrepid and unprincipled Ravendouz Bey ; the second, Arbela, the place where Darius' costly and luxurious camp establishment fell into the hands of Alexander ; the third, the Lycus, or Great Zab, near which fifty thousand Greeks defeated an army of eleven hundred thousand Persians ; and the fourth, Mosul, opposite the site of ancient Nineveh, the capital of the mighty kingdom of Assyria, and an exceeding great city. And here, among the entombed and exhumed wonders of the ancient world, let not the reader fear that I shall descend with him into subterraneous regions, and descant on the hidden relics of antiquity. The subject has been elaborately examined and explored ; and every





NERRI VIINIS



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winged bull and emblematical figure has proved a fruitful theme of conjecture and speculation. From the midst of this general desolation, which so minutely verifies the truth of the inspired volume, that the sceptic cannot doubt, nor the infidel deride, rises the solitary tomb of the prophet Jonah, whose solemn warnings suspended the execution of God's sentence upon the devoted city, and her luxurious and dissipated inhabitants. The venerated shrine, which stands on a conspicuous artificial mound, bursts suddenly on the sight of the traveller as he approaches the obliterated and withered glories of Assyria, and presents a subject replete with a solemn and affecting train of thought, quite in unison with the scene around. The timid seer had long and vehemently resisted the divine mandate, and at last, when forced on his errand of mercy, his denunciations of war save the swarming myriads, but he himself breathes out his soul in a strange country, and among uncovenanted and degraded idolaters. The spot pointed out as the final resting place of the Hebrew seer, is in the enclosure of a large mosque, surrounded by a considerable village, the situation argues against the identity of the place; but may not the grateful and repenting Ninevites, whose destruction his doleful message averted, have, even after the demolition of their city, cherished a veneration for the sepulchre of their benefactor, which all succeeding generations carefully perpetuated."

Mosul, the modern Ashur, as Jews and Christians pompously style it, is separated from the ruined and buried metropolis of that vast and pristine empire, from which it derives its appellation, by the muddy and rapidly rolling waters of the Tigris.

The town, from the eastern bank, looks picturesque and imposing; but no sooner has one crossed the tottering and rotten bridge of boats, than the eye gazes on unsightly streets, despicable bazaars, and dilapidated and decaying houses. The dire rule of avaricious governors has converted whole quarters, where formerly thousands of people vied with each other in honourable industry, into fields and deserts. The number of beggars, who attack the passengers in the streets, is also quite distressing. Long misrule and anarchy appear to have

destroyed all energy, and the heart swells with indignation at the sight of poverty and want in a place where vast fields lie uncultivated around the city walls, which with the smallest labour would reward the husbandman more than a hundredfold. But I must waive the various interesting features of this city, and proceed with the more important matters of my mission. The morning after my arrival, Mr. Rassam, her Britannic Majesty's vice-consul, kindly introduced me to Meshullam and his son, the president and vice-president of the Jews. The old man immediately asked me, what tidings I had to communicate to them. "The best of all," said I; "for I come to proclaim unto you remission of sins and redemption from guilt through the blood of the Messiah."

"Is the advent of the Messiah past?"

"According to the predictions of the prophets, the Messiah was to appear before the destruction of the second temple; and even if the calculations of your most ancient and revered rabbies are correct, the time of his advent has long since expired." I corroborated the truth of this statement by many passages of Holy Writ; they were both perfectly astonished, and entirely at a loss what to reply.

The next day, early in the morning, I went with some Assyrian Christians to visit the Jewish quarter. I proceeded first to the synagogue, but as the service was already over, I directed my steps towards the house of Chacham David. He received me with great kindness and affability, and without any preliminary remarks, engaged in a religious discussion. In the course of our conversation, he observed that he had read the New Testament, and found it a book worthy the perusal of every sensible man. I reminded him, that the Gospel "contained the records of eternal life," and was not merely intended to gratify and amuse, but, "to make men wise unto salvation."

He candidly told me, that there were many things in the Christian verity, which he could not comprehend. I requested him to note down all obscure and intricate passages, and promised on my next visit, by the grace of God, to elucidate all these apparent difficulties.

A Jerusalem rabbi and many other Jews now crowded the court, and as the conversation became more general, Chacham D., who did not wish to disclose his feelings on the subjects in question, kept silent, to the great surprise of all.

Whilst we were conversing, a boy rushed in and told Chacham D., that his brother, Chacham Sasan, who was dangerously sick, desired to see me.

We all went together to the invalid's house. At my entrance the poor man raised himself from his couch, and gave me a cordial smile.

I at once saw that the arrow of death had deeply penetrated his heart, and that for him time would soon be no longer. I therefore inquired, what views he entertained of eternity, and how he contemplated meeting his Lord, the righteous Judge. He would fain have spoken, but the pangs of dissolution overwhelmed him, and he sank speechless upon his pillow. Three days afterwards he died. I availed myself of the opportunity, and related to the Jews the story of Rabbi Johannan; and compared it with the peaceful and happy death of the Christian, who by faith in the sacrifice of Christ could depart in tranquillity and joy.

On Saturday I visited the synagogue. The president kindly offered me a seat on his carpet. After service, I asked for permission to address the assembly; he was ready to give his assent, when the Jerusalem rabbi, who stood near, rudely interfered, and objected to its propriety, alleging that my preaching might tend to ensnare the ignorant of the congregation. I had, however, notwithstanding the opposition of this Pharisee, a long discussion on the atonement of Christ, with many of the most respectable members of the Jewish community.

*Tuesday.*—Chacham David, whom I believe to be sincerely attached to the Gospel, sent to acquaint me of the death of his brother, and also to apologize for his not having called.

During the last few days of my stay, I had many opportunities of declaring, both to Jews and Gentiles, the truth as it is in Jesus. On several occasions my room was thronged with Jews, Chaldeans, and Syrian Catholics. Among the latter

there is at present a great schism, to which the Bishop of Babylon, who has verified the truth of his appellation, contributed not a little. In fact, the Romish Church in Mesopotamia is, since the last year, entirely divided. Some are anxious to have Mutran Seiah for their patriarch, to whom, by right of succession, the patriarchate belongs; whilst the Bishop of Babylon and his partizans have elevated Mutran Joseph to the patriarchal office. This unprecedented conduct of the representative of the Pope, has caused serious dissension amongst the Romish party, and influenced many with a desire to return again to the Nestorian and Jacobite Churches; while it made others solicitous to join the Church of England, if there were only a permanently established missionary. One of their most influential men entreated me to go to Oroomiah, and persuade Bar Johanna, a Nestorian bishop, and a pious excellent man, to come to Mosul, and preside over the antagonists of the new patriarch; and a numerous body, including two priests and several deacons, gave me a petition to the Bishop of London, in which they expressed their earnest desire to join the English Church, and urgently requested the help, guidance, and instruction of a missionary from the Established Church.

Amongst the Jacobites, or as they call themselves, in contradistinction to the seceders, ancient Syrians, are also some indications of a favourable change, the seed which the missionaries (some of whom rest from their labours) have been permitted to sow, is ripening for the reapers, and Mosul promises yet to become a focus of light to the corrupt and idolatrous churches of Mesopotamia.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### INSECURITY OF REWARD FOR LABOUR.

*October 5th.*—Early in the morning, I started for the mountains. Our ride northward, over the plain of Assyria, was replete with interest and solemn reflections. There was no need for a store of historical recollections to convince the mind that here once stood a mighty city, within whose impregnable walls were concentrated the power, wealth, magnificence, beauty, and splendour, of Western and Eastern Asia.

The whole plain, dotted with artificial mounds and tumuli, is an incontestible argument against all criticism, which would define within a limited compass the extent of the richest city of the patriarchal world. Besides these monuments, beneath whose soft sod are interred the stately palaces, gorgeous temples, and costly idols of the greatest power of antiquity, there is nothing to charm or to beguile the lonely hours of the pilgrim. The whole plain, once celebrated for its fertility and productiveness, is at present a neglected and uncultivated waste; and the teeming earth, which once supported countless thousands, now scarcely yields sufficient to supply the wants of a few straggling villages. Many of the peasants know the capability of the soil, and would gladly bestow on it that little tillage which in a short time might yield an abundant increase; but where is the cultivator's security that he will reap where he sowed? May not the harpies of a rapacious governor deprive him every moment of the reward of his industry, or the spoiler from the wilderness cut down his harvest, seize his flocks, and burn his humble shed over him? Only a short time ago, the roving sons of the desert plundered the whole pachalic of Mosul, burned the villages, despoiled the unprotected inhabitants, and even threatened the trembling population of the town with the horrors of an hostile invasion.

The divine predictions against Ashur are thus strikingly

fulfilled, and the traveller, who wanders over this uncultivated waste during the heat of the day, with a melting sun above, and a parched sultry desert beneath him, will find, by bitter experience, "that Nineveh is a desolation, and dry like a wilderness."

Towards evening we gradually approached the rugged mountains of Coordistan; the scene now became delightful in contrast with the tract over which I had toiled since dawn. I felt, however, no inclination to admire the lovely and grand view which expanded before me; as I advanced, fatigue and exhaustion had dimmed every prospect, and I hastened to Elkoosh, a Chaldean village, and gratefully stretched my wearied limbs on the terraced roof of a half-ruined house. In the morning, whilst my servants were loading, I visited the tomb of Nahum, the Elkoshite. The building in which the remains of the prophet,—whose glowing and sublime strain of prophecy must have animated with hope and comfort the exiled tribes of Israel,—are interred, is a low insignificant edifice. The tomb itself is covered with a common oblong wooden box, and a blue calico canopy spread over it. The interior of the mausoleum bears the names of innumerable rabbies, who have performed pilgrimages to this revered spot; and I was assured by the natives, that there were few Jews in Mesopotamia who did not, once in a year, come to worship at the shrine of this admirable seer, who denounced destruction and ruin "to him that imagined evil against the Lord." (Chap. i. 11.)

On my return, I immediately mounted and proceeded on my journey. We had now to ascend the mountains, whose oak-clad ridges appeared so fascinating whilst traversing the scorched plain of the burning desert. We passed several rocky defiles, and then entered a fertile valley, occupied by scores of villages, whose diversified appearance gave the landscape a most picturesque aspect. At ten, A.M., we reached Tahook, and unloaded near the gardens, under some shady mulberry trees.

After having rested a little, I made inquiries as to the number of Jewish inhabitants, and where they resided. A Coord kindly conducted me to the house of Nahma, a Jew,

whom I had seen in Bagdad. I was not long in his room, when the rest of his brethren followed. They were all exceedingly ignorant, and scarcely knew the essential doctrines of Judaism. I asked them whether they had ever heard of the Messiah? They replied, "We believe he will come." "Yes, if you repent and believe in Jesus, whom your forefathers crucified, the glorious period of your redemption will speedily approach; but if you persevere in stubborn unbelief, reject his benevolent plan of mercy, and continue to be satisfied with the promises and hopes with which the rabbies have deluded you, there remains nothing to mitigate the afflictions of time, and nothing to exhilarate the prospects of eternity." One of them said: "Our sufferings in this world will be accepted as a compensation for all our offences." "The law is in direct opposition to what you allege, and as a friend and brother, I can assure you, that unless you bow your knees before Christ and acknowledge Him as your Saviour and Redeemer, the curse of God will for ever rest upon you."

In the evening, the Kiahya, or mayor of the village, who was a Chaldean Catholic, with the priest, and the whole of the Christian community in the place, came to see me. I endeavoured to converse with them on the causes which led to their separation from the Nestorian Church, but they could not assign any other ground for the change, except that the Papa, as they style the Roman pontiff, was the head of the Church. Before I started again the next morning, I went into the house where the Jews (it being the Day of Atonement) were assembled, and addressed them once more. I more particularly reminded them, that all their prayers, tears, and fastings, for the last eighteen hundred years, had not been, and would not be, of any avail with an offended Deity, so long as they did not believe in the saving blood of the Lamb. I gave them three copies of the Gospels, for which they were grateful, and wished me a prosperous journey.

From this to Sandur, our next halting place, was only two hours' distance, the road was winding, between shady fig-trees and luxuriant vines, interspersed with flowers and cooling rills; in fact, nature had so nicely adjusted everything, that the whole



road had the agreeable arrangement of a garden. It was quite a feast to pass through this rural paradise, and I almost regretted when we reached the end of our journey.

Sandur is an extensive village, containing upwards of a hundred Jewish houses, besides a few inhabited by Coords. The place, on our arrival, had a desolate appearance, for all the males were in the synagogue, and the females were wiling away the tedious hours of their Sabbath-day, by sleeping under the trees near a soft murmuring stream. I first intended to make my abode near this inviting retreat, but the fear of disturbing the luxurious repose of these Naiades around their native fountain, induced me to pitch upon some more eligible spot, close to the Jewish synagogue.

My sudden appearance before the place of worship, which perhaps had never been intruded upon by a European, created some sensation amongst the assembled worshippers; and all hastened to see whether I was the individual described by the Jews of Mosul, or a Turkish official, whose very name is a terror to this oppressed race. When they had ascertained who I was, shouts of welcome burst from every mouth, and all offered me their services, and each begged I would make my abode with him. I sat talking with them for about twenty minutes, and then requested permission to declare to them, in their synagogue, those glad tidings which induced me to perform this toilsome journey. They gave their unanimous consent, and at the appointed time I went, accompanied by Yehuda, their Kiahya, to the synagogue. The house of prayer, though spacious, and capable of holding a considerable congregation, was thronged with Jews, whose dress, demeanour, and physiognomy forcibly reminded me of those obstinate and rebellious tribes, of whom all the prophets complain, and over whom the compassionate Saviour wept.

In my discourse to them, my principal object was to impress them with a sense of their great depravity and extreme guilt, and then lead them to see that there was no remedy for their soul's loathsome disease and dreadful misery, except in the perfect sacrifice of the Messiah, through whose blood alone their glorious redemption was effected. The rabbies at the conclusion of my

address, remarked, that they would believe all I said, if I acknowledged the divine authority of the Talmud. I replied, the Word of God contains a complete revelation of the Divine will, and all that is necessary to guide us through this vale of tears, until through the gate of death we enter into the paradise of God ; and as the Talmud is irrelevant and contrary to the tenor and spirit of the Divine word, it ought to be rejected and decried by every sensible and conscientious Jew.

It was now nearly time for afternoon service, and as they were obliged to give water to their mules and donkeys, they all dispersed ; some soon returned again to the synagogue, and others sat down on the grass and on my luggage, reading the New Testament and the tracts, which I had purposely exposed for their perusal.

In the evening, the Kiahya invited me to dinner, and as I could not procure any provisions during the day, I enjoyed the hospitality of my Jewish friend. At night (the country being infested with predatory Coords) the Kiahya gave me a guard of four Jews ; they were armed with swords and pistols, like their Mahomedan neighbours, and unintimidated by fear, reclined on the hard soil near a blazing fire, singing Coordish and Hebrew songs, till near dawn, when I and my servants relieved them from their duty.

Before sunrise, the rabbies came to take me again to the house of the Kiahya, where they said the Jews would soon congregate. I accompanied them, and was gratified to find every avenue to the cottage crowded with a respectful audience. The rabbies had evidently been preparing themselves to test the truth of our holy religion, by the fallacious standard of rabbinism. They quoted and cited several passages from the Talmud, which, however, after a little deliberation, they discovered tended only to intricate and perplex ; and they were obliged to avow that all the rabbies had written was dark and uncertain. "And consequently," said I, "you must go to the law and the testimony, where you will learn that man is vile and unclean, and can only be saved through faith in Him who justifieth the ungodly."

The whole assembly gazed at me in amazement and surprise, for such strange things, they said, they had never heard before.

I sold ten Bibles, distributed twelve New Testaments, some "Old Paths," &c.

In the afternoon, six Jews, with their flocks, came from the mountains; they were dark, shrewd-looking men, and in their speech, dress and arms, differed little from the pastoral Coords. I offered them tracts; but they replied, "Our occupation is with the sheep, and we pay the chachamim to plod over books."

At day-dawn, we pursued our journey over the mountains to Zakho. The Kiahya kindly gave me an escort of four Jews, who accompanied me to a village three hours distant, where I took a guard of Coords. We were now in the bosom of the mountains, surrounded by an awful solitude, and a magnificent assemblage of natural scenery. We passed several secluded villages, but oppression and tyranny had driven the inhabitants from their genial climes, to seek shelter in the more inaccessible mountain districts.

At sunset we arrived in Beski, a large Coordish village, embosomed in a forest of fig-trees and vineyards. The Coords gave me rather an indifferent reception, and it was with great difficulty that we obtained permission to unload before one of their huts. I immediately ordered coffee to be prepared, and having softened down their ferocity by this, to Orientals, delicious beverage, they were more friendly, and with a kind mien commanded me to partake of their evening meal. As no excuse would have been admissible, I sat down on the bare ground, and, with more than a dozen wild and rude men, partook of a little *burgool*—grounded wheat, greased with rancid fat. During our repast, one would relate to me (the Coordish language differs little from the Persian) stories of their former adventures, and of the murders which they committed with impunity; another would curse the Ravendouz Bey and Mahomed Pasha, who subdued and ruined them; and a third assured me that were it not for the terror of the Osmanlees, I should not taste the waters of the Khabur (a river near Zakho).

This conversation did not inspire me with great confidence in the people amongst whom I unhappily found myself; but what could I do? Far from all human dependence and human sup-

port, I realized the nearer presence of my Saviour, and entirely resigned myself to Him whose protection I so frequently and under most trying circumstances experienced. My eyes, accustomed to watch, did not close during the silent and wearisome hours of night; and, long before the whitening clouds in the eastern horizon indicated the approach of dawn, I had roused my party, and guided by two kind Jews, safely and unnoticed, passed beyond the rocky heights which encircle these lawless and rapacious mountaineers. In our onward progress, we traversed many a charming landscape of wood, vale, and ravine, which both cheered the eye and refreshed the spirits. At mid-day, we came to the banks of the Khabur, where we rested a little. The country here began to decline into rugged eminences, till it entirely smoothed down into the plain of Zakho. At four o'clock we entered the small town of the same name; and I met with a friendly welcome in the house of Howajee Nahum, the president of the Jews. Zakho stands on an island in the Khabur; it was formerly a populous and important town, but the reckless despotism of its rulers has wasted the country, and melted away its thriving population. At present, it has one hundred and fifty houses, of which five score are occupied by Jews. During my stay, the most respectable of the community visited me, and I had warm conversations with them. Chacham Rachmim, the chief rabbi of Mesopotamia, who was just arrived in the place, openly avowed in his discussions with me, that many of our doctrines were inculcated in the early writings of the rabbies. This was quite a new discovery to the majority, and led them to listen with intense attention to all I said. At dinner the chacham solemnly affirmed that he had longed to see me, as he was anxious to have some of our doctrines elucidated. He alluded to the passage in the Sohar (a book highly esteemed and revered among Eastern Jews), where it is stated that Messiah is weeping in Paradise, on account of the sins of Israel; and properly observed, "How could he ascend to heaven, if he had not been on earth? and," continued the chacham, "since we know that the family of David is extinct, the Messiah must either have come, or the whole is an emblem and a phantom." He spoke this with such

animation and emphasis, that all present were startled at his predilection for the Christian verity.

After dinner, the chacham, the rabbies of the town, and myself, read some parts of the Sohar. The words, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," which is paraphrased, "the Spirit of King Messiah," struck them very forcibly as an argument in favour of our doctrine. I enlarged on the subject, and from the book before us, and the Word of God, plainly demonstrated the mysterious truth of the blessed Trinity. This, and my conversations with them during the day, had evidently vanquished the most deep-rooted prejudices against the New Testament; and all present began to speak, and to think, decorously and reverentially of our holy religion, which till now they had regarded as a system of refined polytheism.

In the morning I visited the rabbies in their own abodes, and was agreeably surprised to find they were in possession of the Gospel, and "Old Paths." I inquired where they obtained these books; and they replied, "Our friends in Bagdad sent them to us." It was gratifying to me to see the Gospel disseminated by Jews themselves, beyond the sphere of our activity. The chachamim returned with me to my lodgings, and once more we had another animated and lively discussion, which detained me till noon, when they were obliged to go home and prepare themselves for the next day's feast; and I made arrangements for my departure.

At four o'clock I started; my host, Chacham Rachmim, and others, escorted me to the river; where, after many mutual good wishes, and assurances to communicate with each other, I plunged into the Khabur, and was soon out of the sight of my gazing friends. Our next stage was fourteen hours' distance, and it required a strenuous effort, with our jaded animals, to reach the place at day-break. A party of Arabs joined us on the opposite side of the river, and along with them we trudged over the plain at a rapid pace. We passed several Christian villages, where we were assaulted by hundreds of enraged dogs, who are purposely kept to guard against any unfriendly nocturnal intruder.

At dawn we approached the Tigris, here the road suddenly became undulating and rugged. On descending the rocky path, Jezireh burst upon our view, with all the charms of an Eastern city. We crossed the river on a bridge of boats, and then found ourselves in the midst of an uninterrupted succession of ruins, which at the distance appeared most attractive and enchanting. I delivered my letters of introduction, with which the consul in M—— had kindly provided me, and obtained a comfortable lodging in the house of Shamos Anthon, an opulent Syrian Catholic. Jezireh, according to the traditions of the natives, is a very old and famous town. The ravages of time, the sordid spirit of the governors, the plague, and other calamities, have, however, combined to destroy its stately palaces, and magnificent houses, so that it has now more ruins than inhabited dwellings. The population, which of late years has been fluctuating, does not at present exceed five thousand inhabitants, of whom many are Christians and Jews, who all live with their Mahomedan neighbours in amity and peace.

After a cup of coffee with my host, and a short rest, I repaired to the synagogue; the Jews were all engaged in prayer, and as they could not guess from my dress whether I was a Frank or a Turk, by many unmistakable glances they gave me to understand that they did not approve of my untimely intrusion. I did not take any notice of the stir and conjectures my presence excited, but remained quietly sitting at the door, till the reading of the law, when to the surprise of the assembled worshippers, I made my way up to the rabbi, and entered into deep conversation with him. He at once recognized me as an individual of whom he had heard before, and with all the cordiality of old acquaintances, tendered me a loud and hearty "Salam alei-koom."

At the conclusion of the morning prayers, Chacham Shab-zozai, his son Chayim, and the rest of the Jews formed a circle round me, and began questioning on various subjects of Biblical import. From their conversations, I perceived that they had been apprized of my intended visit, and I had no difficulty in introducing the great evangelical doctrine of our Saviour's

atonement. They had never heard anything of the Gospel, and as the Christianity which they saw professed in their native place, could not make any favourable impression upon them, the truths which I propounded quite bewildered their minds and perplexed their faculties. In fact they were all eager to possess a book which delineated man's unhappy fall and deplorable ruin; described the purity, justice, and holiness of God, and, above all, suggested the way to live the life and die the death of the righteous. I despatched E—— to fetch some New Testaments, which I distributed in the synagogue, and then went with the rabbi and his son, accompanied by several other Jews, to breakfast with him in the tabernacle. The rest of the day I passed in friendly intercourse with this interesting community.

In the evening, when all had gone to the synagogue, C—— remained with me, reading the New Testament. He suddenly, however, stopped, and taking my hand, said, with a faltering voice, "I wish to accompany you to Bagdad, and embrace that faith which I feel alone can save me from eternal, and inevitable misery." He uttered this with such warmth, sincerity, and candour, that I was quite amazed at his abrupt confession. When our mutual excitement had a little subsided, I inquired how he would dispose of his wife and children. This was a difficulty on which he had not reflected. I advised him therefore to persevere in his inquiries, until his wife would become reconciled to the change, and follow his steps. I have since heard from him, and am pleased to find he is still impressed with the same sentiments, and living in the hope of speedily following me to Bagdad.

The object of my journey being accomplished, I started again. My original plan was to go to Julamerk, where there are several villages inhabited by Jews; but the distracted and lawless state of that part of the Coordish mountains, made it impracticable to put this plan into execution. I therefore retraced my wandering steps over the plain of Takto, close to the Jebal Judi, where Jews and Moslems maintain the Ark of Noah rested.

I halted the first day at Mankesh, a Chaldean Catholic

village, situated in the midst of the most lovely mountain scenery, and abounding in valleys and heights, on which the finest gifts of nature grow spontaneously.

Past midnight we mounted again, and did not rest until sunset, when, completely exhausted, we reached Amadia. This town is famous in the history of Coordistan; until a few years ago, it was the seat of pashas, who claimed their descent from the Abassides, Caliphs of Bagdad. Ismael, the last scion of a noble and glorious race, who governed these mountains, had twelve thousand villages and towns under his control, from which he derived a vast annual income. The Pasha of Ravendooz, whose victorious army carried terror and dismay into the very heart of the Turkish empire, was the first who aspired to the conquest of this place; but as the town is guarded by nature and fortified by art, his attempts were all frustrated. In 1831 he encamped, with his savage hordes, on the hills opposite the perpendicular rock on which Amadia stands; and by intrigues and treachery seduced the fidelity of two chiefs, who betrayed the town into the power of the remorseless tyrant.

The first few months he evinced some clemency and consideration towards the natives; but when his authority was firmly established, he threw aside the mask, and pillaged and massacred all who were obnoxious to his rule. The Jews, who formed a great part of the population, were treated with merciless cruelty and oppression; many of them migrated to other towns; and those that were not so fortunate, submitted to the yoke of the tyrant. The sultan terrified at the progress of this chief, sent Reshid Pasha, a distinguished leader, against him, who subsequently brought him to Constantinople, where poison terminated his existence.

Mahomed, Pasha of Mosul, then took Amadia under his iron sway. The condition of the Jews was little improved; they were obliged to carry water and stones from the plain to the citadel, and to do every other degrading work, which impeded their industry, and in a short time reduced this flourishing community down to the small number of one hundred families.

The day after my arrival, I visited rabbi Samuel and rabbi



Moses, and at my request they accompanied me to the synagogue. We had only to walk a short distance to reach the large tottering and dilapidated building, which even in its decaying and neglected condition still indicates the former prosperity of the Jews. In the interior of the synagogue were heaped on a pile more than a hundred and twenty scrolls of the law, some of which the rabbies unrolled with a desponding and melancholy countenance. Whilst I was engaged in looking at these sacred rolls, a great number of Jews collected in the body of the synagogue. I turned round and read the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, which so graphically describes the character of their disobedience, and the cause of their dispersion, suffering, and exile. They all listened with breathless attention, and when I concluded, importunately enquired, What shall we do? I answered their query, by giving them a brief statement of the scope, design, and end of the law, with all its symbolical sacrifices, and recommended for their perusal the New Testament, which fully developed the mystery of redemption, shadowed forth in Moses and the prophets.

In the evening (it being the eve before the latter feast, when the Jews generally sit up, praying and reading the whole night) I repaired again to the synagogue. The congregation, who had already assembled, were seated before the ark of the law, with their Bibles in their hands, and long pipes in their mouths. I reprehended them for this irreverent mode of worship; and instantly, with the greatest alacrity, every smoking utensil was removed from the house of prayer.

Rabbi Samuel after whispering with his colleagues, told me that I might address the audience. I gladly availed myself of this unexpected permission, and for more than two hours proved and demonstrated in the presence of upwards of two hundred Jews, the divine origin of the Gospel; elucidated the medium of a sinner's justification; and refuted the fallacious, puerile and delusive hopes with which the rabbies, in contravention to the truth of God, deceive their benighted followers. The effect of my discourse was apparent from the gravity and seriousness of every countenance.

A blind man, but a most excellent Hebrew scholar, thanked

me for what I had told them, and avowed before all, that what I spoke was rational, convincing, and in harmony with the Divine revelation.

At midnight I retired to my lodging, and with feelings of the deepest gratitude adored that Saviour, who had hitherto so signally favoured my preaching in these wild mountains.

The next day the governor called on me, and, without giving or returning my salaam, rudely inquired what business I had with the Jews the preceding evening. I stated to him, in a few words, the object of my intercourse, which immediately removed all suspicion from his gloomy mind; and with eyes gleaming with fire, he said, "Your work is a meritorious one. I hope all the Jews will ere long believe in Christ; for it is better that they acknowledge one great prophet, than deny both." Some of the Christians afterwards told me, that my preaching to the Jews was the general topic of conversation in the whole town.

In the afternoon there were many requests for New Testaments, and those that I could spare were eagerly seized by the numerous applicants. As I was informed by the Jews, that there existed a Hebrew colony in the mountain fastnesses of the Nestorians, I made arrangements to proceed to the place. We set out at mid-day, but as the road was exceedingly rocky, we had to walk; our progress was very slow and tedious.

At sunset we came to Bervarg, a district inhabited by Nestorians and Coords; and without making any application for quarters, I rode up to the bishop's residence and dismounted. His lordship did not at first feel inclined to admit me into his house; but when I told him I was an English missionary, he appeared quite delighted, and endeavoured to make me as comfortable as his circumstances would permit. A little before night he informed me that himself and chaplain were going to vespers, and if I felt inclined, I might accompany them. I readily accepted the invitation, and with my two ecclesiastical friends set out for the rocky pyramids, on whose pinnacle, far removed from this nether world, I

was told stood the sacred edifice. The ascent to this "*Superas ad auros*" sanctuary was, however, no easy task. The venerable bishop, in his simple Coordish garb, with sandals on his feet, and a staff in his hand, bounded over rock and precipice with the agility of a mountain goat. I attempted to follow, but the first few steps admonished me to be cautious. The old man, perceiving my distress, advised me to disencumber my legs of a pair of unwieldy travelling boots; this I did, and supported on his insignia of office, reached the summit of a wild rocky steep, and stood at the entrance of a crypt, which nature, little aided by art, had provided as a temple for these wild mountaineers. The door, which consisted of a massive stone, was closed by a formidable wooden bolt, this the priest withdrew, and with a crash it turned on its hinges and disclosed a dreary, bleak and dismal interior. The bishop immediately took his steel, flint, and tinder out of his pocket, and with the help of a few dry stalks lit a greasy glutinous earthen oil lamp, which instead of diffusing any light, only made the darkness more perceptible. During this process the chaplain had commenced the service, in which his patriarchal diocesan at certain intervals with a sonorous voice, joined. There was a melancholy stillness and saddening gloom around the insulated sanctuary, which solemnized the mind, hushed all sublunary feeling, and elevated the soul in prayer and praise to its Creator.

For a moment the deepening shadows of night, the hollow notes of the worshipping priests, and the unearthly silence of the whole scene, reminded me forcibly of the primitive Christians; but the fervor of their devotion, the purity of their lives, and the entire consecration of their all to the Redeemer, are things for which we must yet prayerfully wait in the Nestorian Church. At the conclusion of the service, the door, by the united efforts of bishop and priest, was again closed, and guided by the glimmering light of the stars, we tracked our way down the perpendicular declivity to the episcopal residence.

In the evening, troops of men and women came to kiss my hand. This is a prerogative to which the hierarchy are

alone entitled, and which I can add, from personal experience, their flocks devoutly and ardently bestow.

This levee in no wise improved our room, already heated by the smoke of a burning fire, and a score of noisy quadrupeds, but as wearied nature must take rest, I fell unwillingly asleep, whilst the bishop and his chaplain, and the whole family circle, were talking and feasting on my coffee. At dawn we mounted again. The bishop, before my departure, gave me a long and fervid benediction, and with this sincere prayer, and his chaplain as guide, I started for Asheetha. On the road we met several flocks of sheep belonging to Nestorians, who had been driven by predatory Coords to seek pasture and shelter far from their own home. At noon we came to the mountains, from which we overlooked the whole district of Tyary. The country, though but little recovered from the ravages under the tyrant Bader Khan Bey, still appeared most beautiful. Villages, or rather clusters of cottages, were dotted on rugged hills, and upland glades; whilst scattered poplars and mulberry trees of most majestic growth, surrounded with luxuriant fields and gay active reapers, completed the impressive picture of this vast amphitheatre. The descent occupied us two hours. At the foot of the mountains we met several Nestorians, who kindly conducted us to the house of the Kashisha Dinkha, where we found good accommodation for the night. In the evening, the same as at Bervarg, most of the Nestorians in Asheetha, assembled in the house of the priest in honour of his guest. They related to me the shocking tales of their sufferings, massacre, and spoliation, under Bader Khan Bey; but as the recital of these horrid atrocities would be too outrageous to repeat, I shall not dwell on this tragical subject. They are again recovering from this dreadful calamity, and under their persevering industry, past losses may be partially retrieved.

The serene and cloudless evening, was followed by a cold, wet, and dismal morning. All the Nestorians assured me that this change in the atmosphere was the harbinger of winter, and that snow would fall in a few days, and intercept all communication with the adjacent mountains. This information altered my plan of travelling; and, disappointed and grieved, I returned

again to Amadia, where I spent two more agreeable and useful days, in preaching the Gospel to the straying wanderers of Israel.

At dawn I bade farewell to the rabbies, and set out for Shoosh, which is about forty miles from Amadia. As we had to pass several lofty mountains with deep ravines, I engaged guides to lead the animals; but notwithstanding this precaution, a pack-horse fell down a precipice, and was cut and lamed on every leg. My muleteer, keenly affected by this accident, and standing with a desponding look, beside the bleeding animal, ejaculated, "Would my wife had been a Corban for thee. O Mahomed! Oh Abdel Kader! why did you not take my wife as a sacrifice instead of this faithful animal." I asked him how he could give vent to such wicked words. "O Bey," returned he, "this black horse was very dear to me." "Yet surely you love your wife more." "Yes, but a wife I can always get, but this black horse is lost to me for ever." It was no use lecturing him on the solemnity of the marriage tie, and the conjugal bond, for he understood these matters better than myself, and I was obliged to let him indulge in his grief, till a fresh animal had been procured for my baggage. At night we reached Shoosh, and made our abode in a pleasant grove of olive trees.

In the morning I went direct to the house of the rabbi, who after conversing a few minutes, proclaimed me a Stamboul chacham. I convinced him, and all the Jews present, of their mistake, by producing the New Testament, and declaring to them the grand and sublime scheme of our redemption. "We are uninformed people," was their reply to my exhortation; "but if the Jews in the other places adopt what you preach, we shall imitate their example." In the afternoon we left again, and arrived the same evening in Akra.

This town, which is one of the most populous in these mountains, is situated on the acclivity of a barren rock, skirting the plain. It contains upwards of eighty Jewish, and a hundred Coordish families. The former, compared with their brethren in the higher mountains, live in ease and prosperity. I visited them in their synagogue, the morning after my arrival. The

rabbi, who was a very ignorant man, felt rather disposed to be hostile, but I told him he needed not to be violent, since I only came to explain to them those doctrines, which are the foundation of the Christian's faith, and the charter of his hope. The congregation, who until now had been silent, replied ; " Yes, it is our duty to investigate the truth ;" and without any opposition, I proved to them that Jesus was the Messiah. The rabbi was confounded and exasperated, and without saying a word, left the house of prayer. I sold some Bibles, and returned again to my lodging.

In the afternoon the rabbi visited me, and apologized for his violence. I reminded him of his great responsibility as a teacher, and the guilt he contracted in preventing his people from searching the Word of God. My calmness appeased his ire and prejudice, and with great moderation we discussed the topics to which he had been so vehemently opposed in the morning. I gave him a Gospel, and " Old Paths," for which he was very grateful.

At four, A.M., we again resumed our march ; the road was level and good, but the atmosphere cold and wet. The first night we slept before a poor peasant's house, the second in Khosarabad, among the lions, bulls, armies and gods of Semiramis, Ninyas, Pul, and all the other known and unknown kings of Assyria. And the third night I was under the hospitable roof of my excellent friends in the British consulate at Mosul.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### ANOTHER MISSIONARY TOUR.

THE favourable disposition with which the Jews in Persia received our message, the earnest desire which they evinced to obtain Bibles, Gospels, and other Christian books; and the constant visits which I received from those whom business, persecution, or the pious desire of a pilgrimage to a holy shrine brought to Bagdad, all tended to incite me onward in my work of faith and labour of love for the persecuted and stigmatized remnant of Israel in the land of Elam. I had, however, many difficulties to encounter in the attempt, my means were limited, my person unprotected, and both Roman Catholic intolerance, and Mahomedan bigotry, were arrayed in implacable hatred against me and my efforts. The vastness of the achievement, and the glorious promises, which blend the conversion of Israel with the restoration of the world and triumphant advent of the Saviour, however, stamped an interest on my endeavours, against which no minor consideration could preponderate; and, in dependence on the aid and guidance of that Providence, which sustained me in so many adverse and perilous circumstances, I set out on my missionary tour, of which the following pages are a brief itinerary.

*February 2nd, 1852.*—I started again. Our journey over the expansive desert, by which Bagdad is surrounded, like an island in the sea, was devoid of all interest. For miles not a shrub or green blade was visible; the cold breath of winter, like the fiery blast of summer, had destroyed and withered all vegetable life, and our eyes gazed in vain at the phantom river, gardens, and castles, with which the atmospheric refraction covered the desolate waste. We unloaded in the caravanserai, Beni Soad, and the greater part of the night were almost stifled by the smoke, heat, and other unmentionable nuisances which

accompany the caravans of holy pilgrims. At dawn we extricated our bodies and luggage from out of the living masses which literally carpeted every inch of the large caravanserai, and, after well shaking and beating my travelling costume, I again mounted. Our march was over the far-spread Chaldean plain, which recalled many associations of human grandeur and human vanity. The country, notwithstanding many centuries of sterility and neglect, still bears the impress of former cultivation and fertility. Every mile or two our road was intersected by a canal; one of these, the Naharevan, has a bed as wide as the Tigris at Diarbekir, and must have been a work of immense labour and expense. Near Bakouba, we crossed the Diala, in a ferry, for which an exorbitant charge is made, and then entered the little town, where, as usual, we alighted in a caravanserai, the only resting-place for unostentatious travellers.

Bakouba is inhabited by several Bagdad Jewish families. I saw most of them, but, like the majority of the poorer classes in this country, they were exceedingly ignorant, and knew nothing, except that they were descendants of those who believed in the Bible. I gave them a few copies of the Tract, No. 9, and requested them to visit Mr. Brühl, should they go to Bagdad.

Our next two stages conducted us to Khanakeen, a large village on the Turko-Persian frontier, chiefly inhabited by Coords, whose principal occupation is plunder and rapine. The place is supposed to be of considerable antiquity, and the medical gentleman of the quarantine told me that there existed long ranges of subterraneous chambers, which the government had closed, as they afforded a safe retreat to marauders and banditti. We directed our steps to the caravanserai, but every nook and corner of that horridly filthy place, the very recollection of which makes me shudder, was so crowded that we gladly availed ourselves of the assistance of some Jewish acquaintances, who procured us a lodging where we could dry our wet clothing, and, without restraint or annoyance, converse on the important questions at issue between us.

Khanakeen and Hajei Kara, two villages only separated by a river, contain twenty Jewish families, besides a few who fre-



quent the place for commercial purposes. I was visited by all, and their anxiety that I should prolong my stay was most truly gratifying. Some of them, including the reader of the synagogue, remained with me till eleven at night, listening respectfully, and with great seriousness, whilst I pointed them to Christ, the refuge of sinners, and the Saviour of mankind. I had promised to come to their synagogue the next morning, but my muleteer was in such a fright at the idea of travelling alone through the mountains, which form the boundary between Turkey and Persia, and which, at all seasons of the year, are infested by an infamous nest of robbers, that I could not resist his remonstrance. We started, therefore, in company with a large caravan of sanctified pilgrims, but not before I had a farewell word with my acquaintances of the previous evening.

The first part of our journey lay across a desert plain, which the rain had so softened that it was a complete swamp, and our mules had to wade up to their bellies through the heavy mire. As we approached the hills the road got better, but the fear of robbers had entirely arrested the life-pulse of our caravan, and the usually joyous cavalcade moved along almost like a funeral procession. When we came in sight of the caravanserai, at Kasr-i-Sherin, these apprehensions subsided, and our palmerpost, with much heroism and defiance, discharged their loaded guns and pistols, which, in case of an actual attack, I am certain would have rendered very little service. The son of my host in Khanakeen told me that only a few days previously a caravan of a thousand pilgrims had been plundered by a few desperate Coords. The caravanserai, which we had to traverse on the backs of mules, (so great was the dirt and filth which had accumulated within its walls,) was, notwithstanding, crowded with garrulous, living pilgrims, and thousands of putrid decomposed dead, all on their way to Nedyeff, to be interred near their great Imam Ali, whose vicinity is a guarantee and passport to Paradise. I had great trouble in finding a little shelter for myself and servants, and at last we were compelled to unload under the gateway, where we were exposed to the cold wintry blasts, and in danger of being trodden under the feet of the numberless horses and mules, which at all hours of the night issued

through the gates. In the morning I left the classic soil, where Khosroe and his beautiful Shireen enjoyed more comforts than myself, without any regret. On the way we were overtaken by a severe shower of rain, every drop of which, as it fell upon our upper garments, was converted into solid ice. Making my way through the hard frozen snow and mud, I reached Sirpool in time to secure for myself and servants a little recess in the caravanserai. The following day we ascended the Zagri Pylae, the Median gates of the Romans, and the boundary line between the two rival kingdoms. The steep abrupt acclivities gave full scope to the ingenuity of our animals, who scrambled over rocks and perpendicular heights with a care and skill quite amazing in brutes. At the summit of the rugged ascent, we came to a ruined caravanserai, and a few huts, inhabited by ferocious-looking desperadoes, whose very appearance might have appalled the heart and blanched the countenance of stouter cavaliers. I felt no inclination to entrust myself to the suspicious huts, and no less suspicious-looking inmates; and as the road was reported safe, regardless of my muleteer's gratuitous advice, I pushed on, and about sunset reached Kerrind, a large village inhabited by a sect who believe in the divinity of Ali. On the following morning we took our leave of the Assyrian mountains, and entered the far-stretching fertile pasture grounds of the ancient Medes. The soil looks still very productive, and, under a well regulated government, might prove an inexhaustible mine of riches; but under the sway of rapacious governors, these celebrated plains, which once supported teeming multitudes, now hardly supply, with the neccessaries of life, a few hundred wandering Coords. Towards evening, we alighted in the poor village Harounabad, and I had to watch the whole night (as my servants were not well) for fear of surreptitious visitors.

On the 24th we came in sight of Kermanshah, a considerable town, picturesquely situated on a rising ground. The whole country was still veiled in the white garment of winter, a sight little calculated to cheer myself or my grumbling servants, who had, for several days been lamenting their cruel fate in having left the sunny city, Bagdad, with its excellent dates and lebn.

*25th.*—I sent Yomtob (my Jewish servant, formerly in the employ of the Bagdad Chief Rabbi, and a good rabbinical scholar), to apprise the Jews of my arrival and intended visit to their synagogue. Mullah Rachmim, their Chief Rabbi, immediately came to welcome me; he assured me that he still had a lively recollection of my former visit, and the doctrines I preached, and, with great solemnity, he added, “Believe me, many of your remarks have sunk deep into my heart, and will never be forgotten.” He, and a friend of his, remained with me several hours, during which I endeavoured to impress them with a sense of their sins, and the need of such a Saviour, as the love of God has provided for us, in the second person of the blessed Trinity. The mullah requested me to give him a New Testament and an “Old Paths,” for a rabbi in some distant town, to whom he intended to send it. I gave him the books, for which he appeared very grateful.

*February 26th.*—The rain fell down in torrents; this, however, did not prevent several Jews from visiting me. They were particularly anxious to know the exact period of Messiah’s future advent. I told them I could not penetrate the hidden secrets of Omnipotence, but as Christ’s first advent was of far greater importance for us as sinners, since it constituted the root of our faith, and the life-spring of our hope, I would willingly explain to them the gradual development of this beneficent scheme, on which the salvation of our immortal souls was pending. They all consented to this, and my interesting little audience listened with intense attention and evident emotion to the successive prophecies, which declared the redemption unfolded in the Gospel of our Lord. I gave them three New Testaments, and a few tracts on Isaiah liii.

*February 27th.*—Early in the morning I directed my steps towards the synagogue, an insignificant mud building, situated in an unhealthy part of the town, and amidst a few wretched hovels, which are a striking proof of the misery of their occupants. The prayers had just commenced when I entered the humble sanctuary, and one of the mullahs immediately came forward, and kindly offered me a large pair of phylacteries, and a silken garment of fringes. I acknowledged his politeness, and

at the same time told him that I did not require such implements in pouring out my feelings in prayer to God. He pointed to an unoccupied seat on a mat, where I sat down till the service, which was neither solemn nor devotional, concluded. The mullahs then invited me to the oratory; and, in the midst of more than a hundred adults, many women, and some children, whom curiosity had attracted, I preached that very Saviour whom they ignorantly have so long despised and rejected. It was a cheering sight (and blessed be God for the privilege) to see such a multitude of perishing sinners, with sorrowful countenances, throbbing hearts, and bitter internal struggles, inhaling, as it were, the words of life and truth, as they fell from Christian lips. One of the rabbies, Mullah Aaron, was evidently afraid of the effect my discourse might have, and politely requested me to speak Hebrew, and not Persian; but I told him that since all were sinners, and stood in need of a Saviour, it was my duty to declare the saving message in a language understood by all. This elicited the "*Barak Allah!*" (May God bless you!) from more than three score voices. At the conclusion of my address, the mullahs endeavoured to weaken its impression by arguments and objections, but they were silenced by their own people, who exclaimed, "Why are we in the prison-bonds of the Ishmaelites, and treated as the dust under their feet? Why do the spoilers seize our property, and kidnap our daughters under their defiled roofs? Surely our sins and unbelief are the cause of this misery!" Even the women, who, on account of their ignorance, are generally great bigots, and famous adepts in cursing and blaspheming, to my surprise, overwhelmed me with benedictions, too Oriental to be translated. May the words spoken have an abiding place in their hearts, and speedily produce the fruits of peace and righteousness to the praise and glory of God!

During my stay I was also visited by several respectable Mahomedans, with whom I had lengthened religious discussions. A few days before my departure, I drank tea in the house of a rich merchant, where I met a *meerza*, or one of the learned profession, who boldly deprecated Mahomedanism, in the presence of his friends: "There are two creeds in the world," said

he, "which have the most adherents, the religion of the Koran, and the religion of the Gospel; but, whilst the one has made the East weak and stupid, the other has made Europe wise and powerful; which, therefore, can be considered the most favoured by Heaven?" This unexpected declaration startled the whole party, and, without a single word, they gazed at each other, perfectly bewildered at such scepticism.

*March 2nd.*—Next to being plundered, rain is one of the greatest evils than can overtake the wanderer in these tenantless wastes, where, for hours, no human habitation is visible, and no shelter against the inclement element can be found. The difficulty is not mitigated after reaching the long looked-for munzil, for the caravanserai, ten to one, is so obscure, that you dread to alight from your jaded animal; and your luggage, bedding, &c., so drenched that you tremble to open them; still, the desire, when you have resolved to start, predominates, and careless of the consequences, you pursue your onward course, in order that your design may be accomplished. I experienced this in leaving Kermanshah; for two stages the relentless heavens had been discharging regular torrents; on the third day the rain ceased, but the sky continued scowling, and dark clouds were enveloping the sharp outlines of the Besihood rock. My muleteer was strongly opposed to my resolution, but being of a pliable and kind disposition, quite unusual in his hardy and stubborn brethren, complied with my request and loaded. Our ride over the soaked plain along the mountain, was fatiguing in the extreme, and our spirits, after seven hours' ardent toil, were not much exhilarated by the lodging which we found near this classical rock, on whose front are engraven, in indelible characters, the deeds of generations long since forgotten, and of heroes whose names are scarcely known, even on the page of history. I had inspected the crested summit, with its arrow-headed inscriptions, and bas-relief figures before, and my eyes unconsciously turned from the glories of old to the spot which was to recruit our strength, and to invigorate our frames for the labours and hardships in anticipation. But how shall I describe, or in what terms express, the loathsomeness of this hospital for the way-farer; at the very entrance of the gate lay the torn and

gory carcass of a mule ; within were scores of confined dead, on their way to the sacred soil of Kerbelai ; and the whole court had the appearance of a common gutter, in which everything disgusting and offensive had accumulated the whole winter. In this tainted and contaminating sink of pestilence, I was reluctantly forced to take up my quarters for the night ; and I don't know whether it was exhaustion, or, as my muleteer pretended, the holy odour of so many lifeless moslems, on their journey to Mahomed's paradise (for I had ten only a few feet from my humble couch), I slept in this poisoned atmosphere, where I was sheltered from the biting frost, and protected against Coordish thieves, so well that, instead of waking the muleteer, as I always did, he had trouble enough to rouse and get me up.

Our next stage was Sahana ; here we only rested till midnight, and then mounted again. Our route extended across several rocky heights, whose gloom and stillness the darkness of the night, and the loneliness and isolation of the scenery around, rendered oppressive and awful. At nine o'clock, A.M., we reached Kengover, a place of considerable antiquity ; it is situated on the brow of a hill, beneath whose base several valleys, wooded with trees, and watered by numerous rivulets, diverge along the wide-spread skirts of the towering Elwand. There are still the prostrate columns and shattered pedestals of a former temple, supposed to have been dedicated to Diana, the goddess of Ephesus, which, together with other classic relics, the barbarous inhabitants have converted into the mausoleum of a prince, and the private dwelling of a few wild Coords. At present this place, which once united the splendours of Asia with the refinement of Greece, is a dirty little town, inhabited by five hundred Mahomedan, and fifteen Jewish families. I visited the latter in their own abodes, and found them very ignorant, but extremely docile, and willing to be instructed. I explained to them the various prophecies in which the Lord from time to time communicated His purposes of love and mercy to fallen man ; and then pointed them to Jesus, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. They made no objection, but deeply lamented that their rabbies, who were paid for instructing them, should be so blinded by prejudices as

to overlook such important and momentous truths. I gave them two New Testaments and a few tracts, which they promised to peruse carefully.

In the morning we resumed our march; our path led us through several narrow windings to an extensive plain, sprinkled with villages, gardens, and well-cultivated fields: a sight seldom witnessed in this forlorn and desolate country.

We halted at Seyedabad, a small town, where, till sunset, I was engaged in preaching the Gospel of salvation to the few Jews who reside in the place. Their reader, Mullah Daniel, and a Jewish physician, appeared deeply impressed with the message of the cross, and they both expressed the hope of seeing me again at some future day, either in Persia or Bagdad. They requested a New Testament, and two tracts, for which they paid with delight the trifling sum I charged for them.

At two o'clock in the night we again pursued our journey; it was dark and stormy, and the clouds, in rapid confusion, chased each other over the lofty Elwand, whose towering summit concealed every other object from our view. The ascent up this steep mountain, was dangerous and difficult, and both man and beast had to use the greatest care, in order not to sink into the drifted snow, which had filled up every glen and chasm; or to roll in the ice-bound ravines, which, at every few steps, dissected these mighty ramparts of nature. After two hours' hard toil we reached the bold summit, from whence the view was most picturesque and romantic. Before us rose Alps on Alps, in one mighty mass of white glaring mountains, turning the darkness into the very light of day; to the south, reposed the plain of Seyedabad, encircled by hills and studded with villages, teeming in the distance with a most variegated cultivation; whilst high above this fertile vale, like specks on the horizon, towered the bold steeps of Sennah and Coordistan. The descent from this rocky, wintry region, though less difficult, was not less dangerous, for every moment we sank into mountains of thawing snow, when we had to struggle and toil in order to extricate ourselves from our uncomfortable position. Mid-day, we came into the vast plain of Hamadan, having walked for ten hours in snow and ice, wet and cold. I

was stiff and benumbed, without feeling or sensibility, power or strength; a sickening sensation had crept over every part of my body, and I scarcely expected to reach the town without fever, ague, or some other illness; but He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, preserves His people wherever they are, and whenever they call upon Him. This I truly experienced, for in looking back upon the hardships I had undergone, and the fatigue I had endured, I cannot sufficiently praise the goodness of God in having, thus unscathed, and without any ill effects, permitted me to accomplish this most difficult part of my journey. At four o'clock, P.M., we entered Hamadan, and I confess that I could neither admire the taste of Dejoces, Astyages, Cyrus, and all the other Median kings, who made this their royal residence. The whole plain, including houses, streets, and even the noble Elwand, were one mighty waste of snow; a sight which depressed the spirits and wearied the eye in gazing over its wide monotonous surface. I hastened to the way-worn traveller's home—the caravanserai,—but was too much fatigued to enjoy any rest.

*March 7th.*—After sunrise I left my gloomy abode, and through a labyrinth of streets and lanes, pent up with snow, pursued my way to the Jewish quarter. I went direct to the house of Chacham Eliyahu, the chief rabbi, a man of considerable learning and great influence; he received me with every demonstration of joy, and with apparent sincerity induced me to take up my abode in his house, an honour which, for various reasons, I thought it best to decline.

The intelligence of my being in the room of the rabbi spread with the greatest rapidity from house to house, and ere many minutes had elapsed, I was surrounded by numbers of Jews, asking for books, or inquiring about the advent of the Messiah. I answered the latter in the words of our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 37—39; to this they objected as an inadmissible authority. I read to them Zech. ix. 9, and compared it with Daniel vii. 13, 14; the rabbi endeavoured to reconcile the two passages by the rabbinical sophism—that if Israel is righteous Messiah will come like a conqueror in the clouds of heaven, and if not, in the garb of humility riding upon an ass. I showed them the in-



consistency of such fallacious arguments and subterfuges, and earnestly entreated them to make the Bible, and not the nonsense of the chachamim, their rule of faith and the basis of their creed. They all promised to visit me, and as it was the Sabbath of rest, I took leave and retired to my lodging.

Early the next morning, Mullah Eliyahu, Mullah Eliezer, and others, called on me. I showed them the books and tracts which I had brought with me; they glanced over the contents of all, and then asked, why we made use of rabbinical quotations, and at the same time did not admit their authority; I told them that our object was to convince them, from the mouth of their own revered commentators, of those important and sublime truths which are foreshadowed and predicted in the Old, and luminously developed in the New Testament. They requested me to prove to them the Messiahship of our Lord. This I gladly did, by dwelling in detail on the mysterious incarnation of our Saviour,—the miracles which authenticated his divine mission,—the mercy, love, and compassion he displayed,—and lastly, his suffering, death, and resurrection, by which the covenant of mercy was sealed, divine justice satisfied, and life and immortality offered to repenting and believing sinners. They listened with considerable emotion, but when they felt their hearts melted and affected by the divine message, they exclaimed, "Stop, and do not disturb our peace with doctrines to which we dare not and cannot give our assent; there are seventy-two creeds in the world, (a notion prevalent among Jews and Mahomedans), go to them and leave us alone." They, however, took tracts, and the chief rabbi asked for a New Testament and a copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress," which I gave him gratuitously, and for which he appeared exceedingly grateful. After this party was gone others came, and so it continued till evening, when, weary and tired, I crept under my cloak and carpet, till I was warm enough to use my fingers in order to record the incidents of the day.

*March 8th.*—Several of the mullahs, and other Jews, occupied me a considerable portion of the day; they had evidently prepared themselves for a severe theological struggle, but soon discovered, that the infallible Word of God was too strong

a bulwark to be assailed by the weapons of human wisdom. One of them had a copy of the blasphemous "Chizuk Emunah," and upon my inquiring where he obtained the book, he replied, "When you last visited this place, you expounded the elements of a creed to which we had hitherto been perfect strangers, and as your words perplexed and bewildered us, we wrote to Bagdad on this subject, and for an answer they sent this book and a few remarks on the "Old Paths." His simple narrative is a convincing proof that wherever the Gospel is preached, although people may be immersed in darkness that can be felt, the saving message will shake their venerated system of error, and infuse a new light into the minds of the perishing and deluded multitudes. Two of the mullahs themselves acknowledged that the "Chizuk Emunah" was directed against Rabbinism as well as Christianity, and to those who study the "Zohar," and other ancient comments, where much of Gospel truth is blended with rabbinical fancies and speculations, it must appear obvious, that the writer of this controversial book was actuated by bitter animosity and rancorous hatred against the followers of the crucified Saviour.

*March 9th.*—At sunrise a messenger from the chief rabbi came to invite me to breakfast. We repaired together to the house of the rabbi, where, from himself and others, I met with the kindest and most respectful reception. Whilst tea was in preparation (a beverage in which the respectable Persians usually indulge in the morning) our conversation reverted to the subject of the Christian verity; the rabbi's son, a clever Talmudist, pointed out to me Matthew v. 17, and exultingly exclaimed, "How can you reconcile this statement with your present practise." I reminded him, that God proceeded by beneficent gradations to the grand and final end. Thus he appointed carnal sacrifices to teach Israel their vileness and deformity, and lead them to look from the bleeding victims on the altar to Him whom they emblematically set forth, crucified for sinners. He next sent prophets to threaten and to warn, to announce hope and proclaim a coming redemption; and lastly, at the appointed time, He gave his son to fulfil the law and to sustain for us its curse. He shook his head

despondingly, and said, "There is much of truth and plausibility in your argument, but, as Jews, we cannot give our adhesion to such an exposition and belief." I exhorted them all not to trifle with God's Word, and, like their forefathers, persist in the rejection of Him who is the Lord of life and glory. Their eyes, with intense earnestness, were rivetted upon me whilst I spoke, and I am certain, that the impression will not be soon effaced.

According to the most accurate information I could obtain, this ancient city is at present inhabited by five hundred Jewish families. They reside in a particular quarter, and in case of public commotion, which generally exposes them to the lawless rapacity of the covetous, and the malevolent persecutions of the powerful, they close the gates of their Ghetto, and so enjoy a faint security till the storm has subsided. Their position is, however, at all times very sad and pitiable, and one cannot behold their sluggish and stooping motion, nor their abject, base, and sordid occupations without being struck with the terrible fulfilment of the prophetic warning.

The avocations in which their industry endeavours to find the means of subsistence are very few, and oppressively restricted. Many are weavers of silk, workers in silver, tailors, and engravers, but the fanaticism of the mullahs grudges them even these humble trades, which, whilst they gain them sufficient to sustain life, make them at the same time feel all the worst pangs of poverty, want, and hopeless destitution. These inexorable and onerous restrictions, which the bigoted sectaries of Ali impose upon the Jew, have crushed his frame and debased his mind; and we must not feel surprised to witness among this people, who have so long submitted to every humiliation, and yielded to every taunt, mortification and insult, till their once susceptible hearts became impervious to ignominy and degradation, traces of the worst crimes and vices which, alas! taint the air of Persia, and pollute that smiling and fertile land.

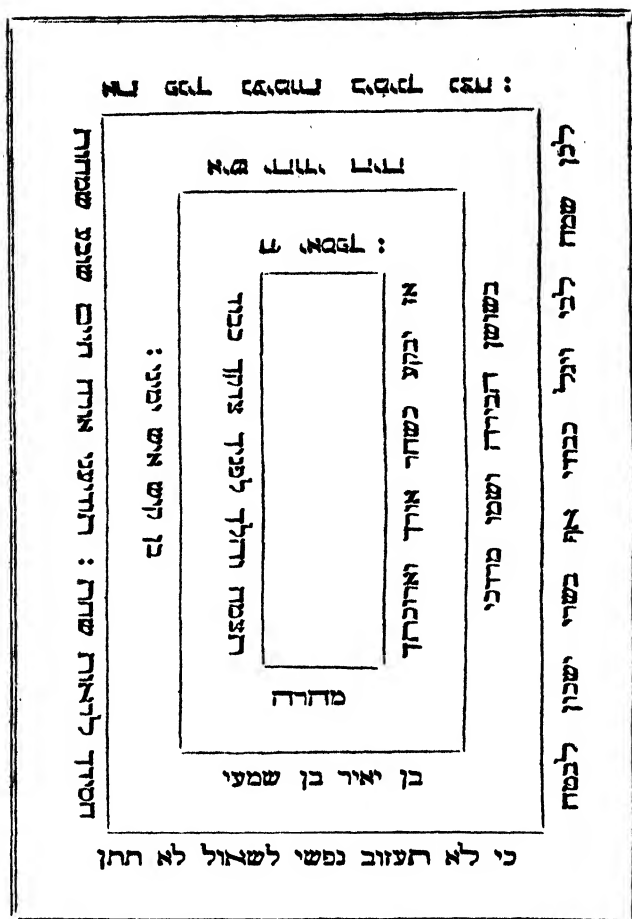
Often, very often indeed, has the missionary in traversing these dark regions reason to blush for his own species, and to wish himself far removed from a scene where the phases of human depravity are so repugnant and repulsive; but shall

these perishing multitudes sink into the grave without a kind voice to warn them of their danger? or a compassionate heart to point them to Jesus? No, our duty is to exhort, warn, and reprove; and although the effects of the preached Gospel are not at once visible, a silent and benign influence is widely spreading, and we may take it for granted that He who has said, for our encouragement, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that," will fulfil his promise, and cause His truth to convert these dark places into vales of life, holiness and joy.

Before quitting the ancient seat of the Median kings, the gorgeous and magnificent Ecbatana, I must refer to one solitary monument which has survived the revolution of dynasties, and the hands of the spoiler. This venerated relic is the tomb of Mordecai and Esther, the devoted benefactors of their kindred, race, and people. The Jews, who are the guardians of this shrine, venerate it with all the warmth of affection, and all the fervour of gratitude which the chained slave feels for his generous deliverer. They look upon its preservation quite as a miracle, and revere it as a beacon of hope, and a type of their future deliverance from the yoke and tyranny of the Gentiles, by the invincible Messiah, the lion of the tribe of Judah. The mausoleum of the holy pair occupies a vacant square, close to the Jewish quarter. Formerly the spot was the privileged burial place of the learned and righteous Israelites, but the mullahs, some years ago, declared such an indulgence an abomination and pollution, and in a few hours every tombstone was shattered, and every grave levelled and desecrated. The fanaticism of these zealots did not even spare the sacred repository of the favoured queen of their clement and heroic Isfundear, (attributes with which they vainly invest the imbecile debauched Xerxes,) the husband of Esther, but with sacrilegious hands they tore down every ornament, seized all the votive offerings, and then, stripped and despoiled, left the sanctuary to the trembling and weeping Jews. The edifice which contains the remains of this distinguished son and daughter of Israel, is a plain brick building with a cylindrical

tower and dome, on the summit of which a stork has built her nest, a habit in which these migratory birds frequently indulge. The entrance into the sepulchral vault is through a low narrow door of solid granite; here the visitor must not only divest himself of his shoes, before he is admitted into the presence of the honoured dead, but bend himself low. This task is not so easily accomplished, as the aperture is very small, and the place gloomy and dark. I was accompanied in my pilgrimage by the mullahs, who had provided themselves with candles, which facilitated the perilous passage. Immediately on touching the threshold, my companions (lightly and softly, as if afraid to disturb the sleeping dust) threw themselves on the glazed pavement, and with all the tenderness of deep devotion and respect kissed the sacred spot. I imitated this affecting example of grateful acknowledgment to the goodness and virtue of these courageous and brave Hebrews. The remains of the two worthy Israelites, who during life were united in one purpose, aimed at one object, and possessed as it were one heart and one soul, whether by accident or design, shared even in death one and the same little patch of earth. The uncle and his niece lie side by side, under the concave of the vault; no gaudy monument marks the site, the simplicity, humility, and piety of their lives are forcibly recalled by their unostentatious graves. Two oblong wooden cases, embellished with chaste flowers, and bearing the following inscriptions in beautiful Hebrew characters, is all that distinguishes the last habitation of the honoured and beloved dead :—

## HEBREW EPIGRAPH ON THE TOMB OF MORDECAI.



## TRANSLATION.

"THEN shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward."

"Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite."

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope."



## TRANSLATION.

"AND the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim ; and it was written in the book."

"And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea."

"Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim."

This monument was erected by the pious and righteous woman, Gemal Setam, and the wise, learned, and exalted physicians, the ornaments of the country, Ezekiel, and his brother, Joshua Yemuel, in the year, A.M., 4,688, or 925 years ago.

According to the writing engraved on the tombs, and also from the character and shape of the mausoleum, it must have been erected some time after the Mahomedan conquest ; the mullahs, to whom I expressed my doubts on the identity of these venerated sepulchres, told me that during the political convulsion which demolished and annihilated every vestige of the Kaianian capital, the original structure was destroyed. They have no written records on the subject, but as an unbroken chain of oral tradition, and the pilgrimages of the Jews from time immemorial, are cogent testimonies in favour of the supposition, I left Hamadan with the persuasion that I had visited the graves of Mordecai and Esther.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE FEW WHO INQUIRE THE WAY.

ON the morning of March 20th I reached Koshan, and alighted in the caravanserai, occupied principally by Ghebres, the steadfast and pertinacious adherents to the Mithratic faith. The gatekeeper and most of the other inmates of the khan remembered my former visits, and welcomed me with all the cordiality of old friends. One of the despised followers of Zoroaster, prompted by the kindest feelings towards me, immediately hastened to acquaint the Jews of my arrival, and before my little cell could be made habitable, I was surrounded by upwards of a score of Jews, headed by Mullah Nehurai, one of the rabbies. The joy of the mullah and others at seeing me was inexpressible; they fell in succession round my neck, and with unaffected delight and great emotion exclaimed, "*Baruch habah*" (blessed is he that cometh). Accompanied by these kind friends, I went to the house of Mullah N., where for several hours, without intermission, I preached Christ and him crucified. In the course of the day the mullah and two of his friends informed me that there was a small band of inquirers, consisting of twelve individuals, including several rabbies, who regularly assembled twice a week to read the Old and New Testament; they have to combat much opposition, and to endure the railings and insults of their prejudiced co-religionists, who frequently apply to them the most opprobrious epithets: but under all these disadvantages they persevere, and I hope that He who has awakened their consciences and affected their hearts, will continue the good work among them, and thus raise up in this heathen place a little community to the praise and glory of His holy name.

It is cheering and consoling to find in this labyrinth of moral and material corruption a few whose thoughts are turned

heavenward, and who, amidst the darkness in which all is involved, seek to obtain some clue and some conviction of those grand doctrines which are the foundation of rational hope and the basis of true religion. Such an oasis in the midst of a moral desert is an encouragement to the desponding missionary, who begins to feel weary and faint in his arduous toil, and though the fruits of his labours only ripen in secret retirement, he has still the sustaining consolation that on the great day of judgment, when the books will be opened, many lips will bless him who was the privileged instrument of pointing them to the Lamb of God.

In the evening, after the Sabbath had terminated, upwards of thirty individuals assembled in the house of my friend, with whom I discoursed for a considerable time on the text, "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," and without exception they admitted the correctness of applying such passages to the Messiah; their great astonishment was that Jesus, notwithstanding all his miracles and the testimony of Scripture, should have been rejected by the Sanhedrin. Mullah N. satisfied them on this point, by referring to the conduct of the Israelites from their exodus out of Egypt till the destruction and annihilation of their polity; they had nothing to object, and remained for several minutes absorbed in serious reflections. I retired late at night, worn out with speaking and want of rest, having travelled six nights in succession, though at the same time I could not but bless God for the many tokens of his favour, which he had graciously vouchsafed to my humble efforts.

Early the next morning the Jews began again to collect; many of them asked for books, and those whom Mullah N. pointed out to me as sincere inquirers (and their number was certainly considerable), I supplied gratuitously, whilst others had to pay a small sum in order to enhance their value. I also saw all the mullahs, and amongst others their chief rabbi, Chacham Mordechai, a clever bigoted Talmudist, and fierce opponent of the Gospel; he embraced me with apparent cordiality, and shaking his head said, reprovingly, "You come amongst us like the angel in the New Testament; to agitate

the waters, and when the storm is most impetuous, you leave us to contend with the raging elements." I reminded him that the angel who disturbed the waters of Bethesda had a holy and beneficent object in view; "And if my errand of mercy," added I, "accomplishes the same end, the little anguish and contrition of heart is amply repaid by the peace and perfect happiness with which the Gospel fills the soul of the believer." "I suppose," rejoined he, "you mean those who believe in that blasphemous doctrine, that Christ was God." "Yes, rabbi, those very truths which you call blasphemous, are still contained in the Bible, and maintained by your doctors and expounders of the law, for hear the statement contained in Echa Rabbathi, (Lam. 1—6), 'What is the name of Messiah?' Rabbi Abah replied, 'Jehovah is his name, as it is said, He shall be called the Lord our righteousness.' Here you have Bible truth with rabbinical comment, so that you must either deny the authenticity of both, or admit the divinity of the Messiah." He was embarrassed and perplexed, and as I continued to quote other passages to corroborate the veracity of our belief, he requested me to desist, and politely inquired how we could reconcile the non-fulfilment of all the prophetic promises with the advent of Messiah. I reminded him that Scripture predicted a twofold advent. "Ah," interrupted he, "those nice distinctions which you endeavour to deduce from a few abstruse parts of the Bible, vanish into air before those who are learned and intelligent;" and upon my requesting him to furnish me with his own comment on those very passages, he got confounded and entangled, and stated one moment that Messiah was in Paradise, and yet that he was not born, and again that he was afflicted for the sins of Israel, and still that he was only to be an irresistible conqueror. In fact the mistakes and absurdities of this rabbi were so glaring, that his own friends entreated him to be silent, as he was certainly wrong. He challenged me to friendly epistolary controversy, to which I readily consented, on condition that both his objections and my refutations should be openly read in the synagogue. The mullahs all gave their assent to this proposal, and I thus trust that the spark of truth, which under the good providence of God has been kindled in

this place, will in my absence be fanned into a glorious flame: Mullah N. was quite delighted with the proposition, and whispered in my ear, "I shall make him perform his engagement."

In the evening my friends, the followers of Zoroaster, known by the name of Ghebres, or fire-worshippers, invited me to spend a few hours with them, in order that I might explain to them the doctrines of Christianity, which had excited so much interest and enquiry among the Jews. I immediately repaired to their cells, and without interruption declared to them all the elementary truths of our holy religion; *viz.*:—the compassion and goodness of God; the fall and corruption of human nature; and our final redemption and justification through the atoning blood of Christ. They acknowledged that the religion of Jesus, if thus clearly and plainly propounded, must enlighten and convince the mind; but upon making the question more personal, they became very uneasy, and anxious to terminate the conversation. They asked me for Persian New Testaments, but having disposed of the few I had with me, I lent them my own copy, which I believe was read the greater part of the night and the whole of the following morning. They told me, that they would write to Teheran for Bibles, as I had interested them in the contents of the same.

Before I retired to rest an incident occurred, which I record simply because it shows the anxiety which was manifested to obtain our books. A poor Jew, during the evening, came for a copy of the Hebrew Gospel, but as I was engaged with the Parsees, he waited till I left their room, and then in a most suppliant tone made his request. Unfortunately the boxes had been closed and packed, and my muleteer swore by the life of Mahomed and the beard of Ali, that if the cases contained Korans, and the Jew wanted to become a Moslem, he would not be disturbed at midnight, and untie his loads. The poor man, when he heard this, was in great distress; still nothing could shake his determination, for he said: "The gatekeeper may try to eject me (it being late and contrary to the regulations to loiter about in the caravanserai at this hour), and your muleteer may scold and maltreat me,—I love Christ,

and will have his revelation." I could no longer resist this appeal, and so unpacked one of the loads, which occupied me more than half-an-hour, and presented him with a Gospel; and I believe that a present was never more gratefully acknowledged. He actually fell at my feet, and alternately kissed the book and my boots; even in going away he clasped the little treasure to his heart, and, with eyes raised upwards, blessed the donor of this valued gift. I mentioned the circumstance to Mullah N., who told me he knew the man, and that he was both sound in mind and well acquainted with the Bible.

On the 22nd the Jews again assembled, and once more heard those truths which for the last two days had engaged our time and attention. They all listened respectfully whilst I expatiated on the holiness of the Gospel, the love and gratitude it inspires, and the peace and happiness it is intended to convey. The greatest solemnity prevailed whilst I spoke, and I doubt not that, under the blessing of God my efforts will redound to the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. At noon I departed, followed by the good wishes and prayers of many, in whose hearts the words of life and truth had found a place. We had to traverse a plain level country, and, as I was anxious to get on, we made long stages; and, on the morning of March 24th, found ourselves within the half-ruined city of Koom. I met here a good number of Jews from Koshan and Teheran; and amongst others, Hakim, or Dr. Aaron, for whom I had a letter from his son, Mullah Nehurai. I sent my servant to deliver it to him; and when he heard who was the bearer of it, without perusing it, hastened to see me. We remained together two hours, during which we conversed on the divine truths of the Bible. The doctor, in the presence of several Jews who had joined us, acknowledged that the Christian scheme of salvation, through a divine Saviour, was in perfect harmony with Scripture, and far superior to the fanciful system of Rabbinism, which only blinded the eyes and enthralled the minds of the people. He would have continued with me the whole day, but a servant of the Nayeab-e-Sultana, brother of the present king, called him away to attend his royal highness, whose medical adviser he had been for several months.

In the evening I called on him at his lodging, and from six till ten o'clock, one subject occupied us, *viz.*, salvation through the blood of the Messiah. On going away I said, "Doctor, I hope the message of redeeming love will, ere long, cease to be only a topic to occupy the lips, but be practically felt in the heart, and make you and yours happy through faith in the sacrifice and death of our adorable Saviour." "The heart knows its own bitterness!" was his reply; and, with evident emotion, he exclaimed, after a little pause, "We are in Persia, where the sword of persecution is suspended over our heads, and woe to us, if by a premature act, we arouse the vengeance of our enemies: but of this you may be assured, that many in Koshan will as intently love Christ and his Gospel, as they formerly rejected the one and despised the other." O pray for this benighted land, and perhaps God will hear and remove the obstacles which impede the glorious development of the Gospel power.

We pursued our journey again on the 25th, in the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," adverted to in the preceding pages; we lost our path, and for several hours wandered, in the darkness of night, over a trackless desert. It was, however, quite providential that we did so, as a caravan, not so well guided, was plundered, and had we not deviated from the main road, we might have shared a similar fate, and entered the capital in a condition approximating to primitive simplicity.

Soon after my arrival I went to the Jewish quarter, and called upon some of the mullahs; they were very civil and polite, but quite averse to any religious discussion; in fact, I invariably found, that where European vices and the idolatries of fallen churches are known, the Jewish mind is strongly prejudiced, and access to it difficult to obtain. One of the mullahs, who appeared more loquacious than the rest, said to me, "You are not a stranger amongst us, we have seen and conversed with you before, and love you as a brother, because we know your object is to do us good, and to promote our welfare; but since there are in this place, English, Germans, Russians, and Armenians, who believe in the New Testament, change them first, and then come and teach us." I certainly found this argument

very forcible ; and the only answer I could return was, that the conduct of man, whatever it might be, did not justify wilful unbelief ; for, as moral beings, we must be guided by the revelation from heaven, and not the acts of sinful mortals. I distributed a few tracts, and they all promised to visit me.

My acquaintances kept their word, and, in a numerous body, came to see me. I showed them copies of our books, but they admired the beautiful print more than the important contents. The Liturgy of our Church greatly pleased them, and particularly the Litany, which they read twice over. I asked them what they thought about the Trinity ; they replied, with apparent modesty and simplicity, " We know perfectly well that you prove all your assertions from the Word of God, but since your doctrines are opposed to the teachings of our rabbies, we cannot give our assent to them." I exhorted them not to close their ears against the infallible truth of the Scripture, and, like infatuated beings, prefer darkness to light, error to truth, and thus draw upon themselves the wrath of heaven and the judgments of God.

In the afternoon, Mullah Rachmim, the chief rabbi, and a friend, visited me ; they both recollected Dr. Wolff, and spoke of him in the most affectionate terms. We conversed together a long time, and the mullah showed both that he had read the Gospel, and felt reverence for Christ and the Christian belief. His great objection was against the divinity of Jesus ; " If this did not form an article of your creed," said he, " I would at once declare myself a Christian." I told him that his objection was not against our Lord, but against the whole Bible, where this doctrine was plainly stated. " There are mysteries in Scripture," observed he, " which only those can fathom who understand cabala."

I endeavoured to convince him of the folly of such suppositions, but he only smiled at my incredulity. He invited me to call on him, which I did the next morning, when I had an opportunity of preaching in the synagogue on the true Paschal Sacrifice, even the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

My work in the capital being accomplished, I set out for

Mazanderan, an entirely new and untried missionary ground. My journey over the snow-clad Demawund, was one of the most trying and difficult I ever performed; and only those who have travelled in regions where the extremities of heat and cold, rain and snow, incessantly alternate, can conceive the full extent of the toil and sufferings I had to endure. But a merciful Providence guided and protected me, and the privilege of infusing a spirit of inquiry among hundreds of Israelites, who never heard the message of salvation, or exercised their minds on the topics of religion, made me forget all the hardships I had encountered, and all the troubles that still awaited me. At my arrival in Balfroosh, the principal city of ancient Hyrcania, I met with a reception which at once threw a gloom over my hopes, and made me regret my undertaking. For hours, weary and exhausted as I was, I had, under a pouring sky, to search and seek after a lodging; even in the caravanserais, the bigoted owners refused me admittance; and when at last my patience was at an end, I gladly accepted a damp, humid cell, which I at first declined, in a khan occupied by Calmucs, Tartars, fishermen, and all kinds of other Russian rabble, from the shores of the Caspian. When I had a little humanized my temporary abode, and changed my dress, I went to the Jewish quarter. As it was the feast of Passover, a season of idleness and inactivity, I found most of the Jews either indulging in the inebriating cup, or sitting in groups under some shady tree. I addressed one party, and inquired after the house of the mullah. The sound of Hebrew had such a startling effect upon them, that without answering my question, they hastened to the mullah's house, whither I closely followed them. The worthy rabbi, on perceiving that I spoke the sacred language, and that my servant was a Jew, laid aside all restraint, and welcomed me with unaffected cordiality. He inquired after the object of my visit; and upon telling him that I had come to proclaim to him and his people Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, he exclaimed, "I have heard a great deal about you, and also read the New Testament, which was given me by a friend in Teheran." I asked him whether he would allow me to preach in the synagogue. His reply was, "I have no objection, but Chacham



Rachmim, from Hebron, who is just now here to collect charity, will not consent to your proposition, as he is a bitter enemy to Christ, and constantly boasts that he will counteract the efforts that you are making in Persia." "Then you have been conversing on the subject of Christianity?" I said. "Yes; I am deeply interested in the contents of the New Testament, and whenever I can get some elucidation about the Christian doctrine, it is the topic of my conversation."

A great number of Jews, who had crowded the house, requested me to preach to them, I willingly complied with their wish, and, for about an hour, instructed the multitude around me in the knowledge of the Great Mediator. They made no reply, but whispered to each other, "Is it possible that we could have been so long in error?" As I was quite wearied and worn out from my long journey, and not fit for any great exertions, I returned, after this introduction, to my lodging.

The next day, after the service of the synagogue, I called upon my acquaintances of the previous day. They were quite pleased to see me again, and only regretted that the Sabbath prevented them from showing me any hospitality or attention. I told them that my object was to proclaim to them the redeeming love of the Messiah, and if my words tended in the least to remove their early-contracted prejudices, and lead them to Christ, the only Saviour of mankind, I considered myself amply compensated for all the hardships and privations of my journey. Mullah Ibrahim, and others, assured me of their deep interest in the doctrines of the Gospel, and with much sincerity and great emphasis they said, "You may take it for granted that what you tell us will not be so soon forgotten, but remain enshrined in our hearts for many, many years to come." I spoke to them at least two hours, but no one moved from his seat, nor were fresh comers allowed to cause any interruption. They all hung on my lips like those who felt that life and death were pending on the words I uttered. The mullah thought it his duty to make a few objections on the doctrine of the Trinity. I referred him to those passages in the Old Testament which unfold this mysterious subject, and he appeared quite satisfied that I was right. I distributed

several tracts, and many promised to call on me for books and further discussion. I remained in the Jewish quarter till near night.

*April 11th.*—I called on Chacham Rachmim, the rabbi from Hebron, who was here to extort charity from the poor and afflicted Jews, for their lazy brethren in the Holy Land. He was just enjoying his siesta, and appeared greatly annoyed that I disturbed his repose; but a very humble apology restored the equanimity of his ruffled temper. Like all these itinerant rabbies, he was puffed up with pride, vanity, and arrogance; and, without respecting in the very least the feelings of the people, whom he was ready to deprive of their last penny, he turned to me, and in the presence of several scores of Jews, who had followed me in order to hear my discussion with this savant in rabbinical lore, said with the greatest contempt, “You might have avoided coming to this abominable place, for all the Jews whom you see before you are amharatzin, and scarcely better than brutes.” I asked whether he thought the uninstructed fit for nothing else except to graduate in vice, and to grow up in the lap of sin? “Yes, for God only tolerates the amharatz (unlearned) in order that he may be saved by the merits of the righteous.” I reminded him that such doctrines were inconsistent with the word of God, which declares that “every one shall die in his iniquity.” “Like most people of your faith,” he replied, “you nourish the credulous belief that the Bible must contain everything.” I told him that this was my firm conviction, and unless he could show me that the fanciful stories and absurd doctrines of the Talmud were calculated more than the Bible to convince the mind, change the heart, and raise the soul in adoration to the Creator, my veneration for the inspired volume would never become less fervent by comparison.

The Jews now asked whether the New Testament contained nothing objectionable. I brought to their recollection what I had stated the day previous, namely, that the doctrines taught in the Gospel were those of Moses and the prophets, and that no one could consistently impugn the one without attacking the other. They requested me to shew them how the Old and New Testaments were so closely connected, this I readily did, and for a considerable time expounded the various prophecies which took their

ultimate and glorious fulfilment in the person of our blessed Lord. The chacham was anxious to lessen the impression which my words had made; but it was evident that their hearts were touched, for several said, quite aloud, "Here is the palpable proof of our guilt, and the obvious cause of our misery." "Yes," said I, "not in vain is your heritage seized by your enemy, and your country desolated by infidels; not in vain are you exiles and bondsmen to your oppressors, your goods either taken from you by violence, or wrung from you amidst groans and bitter agonies. Renounce the errors to which you have so long inflexibly adhered, and you may be sure that He who for us and our salvation trod the path of privation, toil, and death, will graciously receive you, for His word is infallible, and He hath irrevocably declared, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The tears glistened in many eyes, and the deepest solemnity reigned whilst I spoke.

*April 12th.*—Early in the morning the Jews crowded my little room in the caravanserai. Many of them had been reading the New Testament, and the questions they had to propound were numerous indeed. The mullah asked me why, since the Gospel commanded that Christ should be preached among all nations, they had been so long neglected by the followers of Jesus. I told him that the greater part of the world was still enveloped in darkness and sin, and gave them a short account of the conversion of several of their brethren in Europe; and the trials and difficulties, sufferings and persecutions, which many of these have had to endure, quite affected them, and they said to each other, "Surely this religion must be divine, or else such effects could not be produced." Our conversation was suddenly interrupted by loud shrieks and lamentations, accompanied by cries, "Chacham! oh, Chacham!" I looked out of the door of my cell, and, to my horror, saw upwards of twenty Jews lashed over the court by the whips and clubs of about a dozen Mahomedans. I instantly rushed out, called for the gate-keeper, and told him that I held him responsible for the outrageous conduct of the ruffians, who thus wantonly maltreated poor and inoffensive individuals. He and the other Mahomedans were rather astonished at my interference in behalf of

Jews, and, in a most impudent strain, assured me that if I took such sympathy in their sufferings, I might as well become a sharer in their punishments; and I believe the threat would have been executed, had not several Russian fishermen hastened to my relief. I would have brought the affair before the Governor, but my own unprotected position, the doubtful advocacy which two Russian merchants promised me, and the universal contempt and abhorrence in which Jews in this country are held, all conspired to mitigate my solicitude to obtain redress for these patient sufferers. Whilst I was thus engaged in defending the Jews in the court, their brethren in my cell remained perfectly tranquil, and when I asked them how they could, with such indifference, see their friends maltreated, their simple reply was, "we are accustomed to these things."

Towards evening, I went again to the Jewish quarter, and sat down with about a score of Jews under a shady mulberry tree. Unfortunately, most of my audience had too much indulged in an afternoon draught, (a practice too frequent among all sects in Persia,) and were unfit for any religious discussion. In returning to my lodging, I met a good number of Mahomedans, who inquired whether I had any tracts against their Prophet. Upon my asking why they wanted such pamphlets, they replied with great caution, (for I saw them gazing in all directions to see whether any of "the faithful" were near,) "Because we detest Mahomed, and ridicule his Koran." During the short conversation which I had with them in the street, I learnt that they were secret followers of Baba, the renowned Persian socialist, whose community two years ago menaced both the religion and throne of Persia. The founder of this sect, and thousands of his adherents, died an ignominious death; but, notwithstanding all the rigour which has been applied in order to extirpate this heresy, there are still many thousands of the rich and learned in Mazanderan, and other provinces, who venerate Baba, and regard his violent death as a national calamity. I informed my acquaintances in the street, that I should be happy to see them in the caravanserai, but they were afraid to meet me, for fear of exciting suspicion. One of them, who from his white turban appeared to be a mullah, said, "In-

shallah," (i.e., please God,) "we shall yet drive Mahomed, Ali, and all the Imams from Persia; and whether we become Ingleese, or Russ, (meaning Christians of either Churches,) is to us a matter of indifference, since all creeds are better than that of the Arabian robber." I was glad to get out of their company, for although they appeared to belong to the aristocracy of the place, still their language was too violent, and their opposition and hatred to the Prophet of Mecca too bitter, for any lengthened conversation in the public thoroughfare.

*April 13th.*—Accompanied by a good number of Jews, the chacham from Palestine visited me. He was much milder than he was a few days previously, and without any hesitation told me that he had been reflecting on our discussion; and though he could not agree with me in my views of Rabbinism, still he thought the expounders of the law could not be considered infallible, nor their comments received without doubt. I assured him that if he read the Gospel, and compared it with the Old Testament, he would find many truths unfolded, which were veiled to him in doubt and uncertainty. He shrugged his shoulders without making any remark. When this rabbi, whose presence imposed a certain restraint on the Jews, was gone, I had a lengthened conversation with them, in which I endeavoured to inpress on their minds the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They all promised to read the New Testament, and, with tears rolling down their wan cheeks, entreated me to visit them whenever I came to Persia. "You think, perhaps," said they, "that we are ignorant men, and indifferent to your message; but believe us, this is not the case. We all here long for the advent of Messiah; and O, if Jesus is the true Christ, do thou O Lord, revive our drooping spirits, by revealing this now faintly understood truth to our dull and heavy minds." The last words were uttered with such deep earnestness and solemnity, that I felt quite affected, and at the very moment besought the Lord to hear and answer their petition.

*April 14th.*—I visited the Jewish quarter early in the morning. There was an evident feeling of regret at my approaching departure, in which young and old seemed to participate.

I once more explained to them the system of Christianity, declaring its warnings of woe and announcements of glory, and concluded by exhorting them to read the Gospel and Bible without the distillations of the rabbies; as they were the only books, which, by prayerful investigation, could enlighten and convince their minds, invigorate and ennoble their souls, and fill them with hope and happiness, of which no contingency could ever deprive them. Many accompanied me to my lodging, where they remained till night, and then having to make preparations for my departure, left very reluctantly.

Balfroosh is the largest city in Mazanderan, the ancient Hyrcania. It is situated three hours' distance from the Caspian sea, and in the midst of an unbounded forest of most luxuriant groves of orange, lemon, and other fruit trees. Formerly it was a town of great importance, and inhabited by more than two hundred thousand souls, but the usual causes, oppression and misgovernment, have so diminished the population, that at present this once thriving and flourishing city does not contain more than twenty thousand inhabitants; who, notwithstanding the convenience of the place for trade, and the fertility of the soil for cultivation, have to contend with difficulties, and to struggle with many adverse circumstances. There are no Christians in Mazanderan, but the Jews live scattered all over the country. Balfroosh is inhabited by a hundred and fifty families. This afflicted and persecuted remnant of a once considerable community, suffer all the torture which the lash of slavery, bigotry, and cruelty can inflict. They occupy a particular quarter of the town, and have six synagogues, a number far too great for so small a body; but enmity and hatred have caused sad divisions among them, and not unfrequently the nearest relatives will not worship together in one and the same sanctuary. It is remarkable that in many towns in Persia, where the Jews are subject to the greatest tyranny and injustice, instead of being united by one common bond of affliction, they are generally dissevered by the most trivial differences, and cherish such intense feelings of revenge, that they frequently betray each other into the meshes of their persecutors, and bring wretchedness and ruin on their own heads.

I saw several Jews who had turned Moslems, and upon inquiring why they abjured the religion of their fathers, the invariable reply was, "Our brethren have compelled us to acknowledge the enemy of our nation as the prophét of God." I spoke to a good number, and endeavoured to effect a reconciliation between them, but it was in vain. The seed of discord seems rooted amongst them, and all their energies are employed to sap the life-blood of their co-religionists. Unhappy people ! Oppression has debased their minds and vitiated their hearts, and the missionary looks prayerfully forward to the time when even here the various vicissitudes which have so long imperilled the existence of this enslaved sect will be removed, and the regenerated and believing sons of Abraham prove a blessing in the midst of the land.

The Jews generally experience great hardships and trials during the summer ; in fact, from May till October, their quarter is a lazar-house of corruption, sickness, and death. The Mahomedans avoid the fatal effects of the destructive malaria which floats over the marshy soil, near the coast, by removing to the Demawund mountains ; but the oppressed Jew, who is scarcely safe in town, dare not venture on a tented life. He must patiently endure the ravages of disease, and see one after another of his friends and relatives, either prostrated on the hard couch, or stiffened by the icy hand of death, without being able to flee from a scene where everything is for several months enveloped in a deep gloom. Sometimes if there is a drought, their misery and suffering is greatly aggravated ; for such visitations their unrelenting persecutors always ascribe to their unbelief and obstinacy. The sorrows and sufferings of the living being, however, insupportable and overwhelming enough, their enemies to satiate their intense and inhuman hate, with an invective cruelty which makes the heart recoil, and the soul shudder, exhume ten, fifteen, or even twenty, recently deceased Israelites, and these amidst wild shouts and pious ejaculations they consume on a lofty funeral pyre. It is a curious coincidence, that this savage exhibition of bigotry and fanaticism is usually succeeded by the longed-for blessing. The Jews say it is the work of Satan ; but I believe that the

wily mullahs wait till the rainy season is near, and so their sanctity and Jewish guilt are placed in the eyes of a stupid, ignorant populace, in more striking contrast.

*April 15th.*—At five o'clock, A.M., my muleteer came to load. The rain which had been pouring down the whole night, continued with unabated impetuosity in the morning, and I felt exceedingly reluctant to start; but as the spring in Mazanderan is frequently very treacherous, and for many weeks the fields and roads are inundated, so that all communication is interrupted, I thought it most prudent to avail myself of the present, without trusting to the uncertain future. Our route was north-west, over tangled, intricate rice-fields, where we had to wade several feet deep through swamps and marshes, a task wearisome enough when the weather is fair, but perfectly prostrating when wind and rain combine together to impede the pilgrim's progress.

At two o'clock we reached Amal, the third of the large cities of this province. It is a considerable town, divided by the Hezan river, which runs into the Caspian. The climate of Amal is by far more salubrious than Balfroosh, and the inhabitants are not obliged to go to their Yeilah, or cold region, as most people in the other cities and villages of Mazanderan do; but, without any inconvenience, they pass the hot season in their own dwellings, and pursue their usual occupations. I unloaded in the traveller's home, the caravanserai. The owner, who was both shoemaker and shopkeeper, gave me the room which contained all his riches for my accommodation; a favour I did not appreciate much, for I found that this place was the rendezvous for all the idlers of the quarter, who killed their time by most obscene and indecent amusements. Driven from my lodging, I sought a retreat in the stable, where, without disturbance or annoyance, I could receive the visits of the few Jewish merchants who reside here. Four of them had been in Balfroosh during Easter, and, consequently, heard a great deal about Christianity, which they all communicated, verbatim, to their friends. They were quite pleased to see me, and to hear from my own lips the glorious tidings of life and immortality, of which their friends had spoken. They remained with me till



near night, and then only left for a few minutes to shut their shops, and immediately came back again. They complained bitterly of their sufferings and oppression ; and the timidity and terror which they manifested whenever a Mahomedan intruded himself upon us, strikingly convinced me of the insecurity of both their lives and property. Like most of their nation in Persia, misfortune and tyranny have softened their hard, unyielding obstinacy, and prepared them, to some extent, for the reception of the Gospel. The only surprise was, that the sufferings of Christ, which are so plainly delineated in the Old Testament, should so long have proved a stumbling-block to the conversion of their brethren. They retired very late at night, delighted with what they had heard, and grateful for the books I gave them.

*April 16th.*—At mid-day, I bade farewell to this isolated band of Jews, and pursued my route. Our path conducted us through a part of the famous Hyrcanian forest, where every object we saw was calculated to attract and cheer the eye. Sometimes we had to creep through darksome shady lanes and avenues, where thousands of larks and nightingales mingled their sweet voices with the rush of mountain torrents, and the sighs of the fragrant zephyrs ; or we again found ourselves in a verdant dell, covered with fresh grass, enamelled with aromatic shrubs and flowers, and overhung on all sides by wooded hills, from which gleamed, at intervals, the picturesque cottage of a peasant, or the frail tenement of a shepherd. With the decline of day, we emerged out of this delightful landscape of woods and vales, (a sight peculiarly interesting in a country where a blight seems to rest on both mountains and fields), and made our abode, during the night, in caves excavated in the rocks, which abound in this part of Mazanderan, and form the best shelter both against wind and rain.

The next three succeeding days we had most wearisome and dangerous journeys, over bare rocks and the shelving-sides of precipitous heights, where a single false step would have dashed one in pieces long before reaching the foaming stream, which rolled over an uneven bed in the deep ravines below. It was quite marvellous to see the jaded animals moving

securely along the edges of most frightful precipices ; indeed nothing but the sense of their danger, could have given such firmness to their steps and dexterity to their feet.

On the night of April 19th, we slept in a ruined caravanserai, near the peak of the venerable Demawund. I have experienced most severe frosts in Persia, but never did I feel a more intense and biting cold than in these lofty regions. I was actually obliged to keep my hands and feet in constant motion, in order to maintain vital heat in them. My servants and muleteer, who did not feel inclined to imitate my example, lay on the ground almost insensible. With great difficulty I roused them, and tearing down a few beams of wood which lay across the roof of a decaying stable, I lighted a fire, and gave to each a cup of tea ; this revived their spirits, and prepared them better to resist the benumbing effects of the frost.

On the afternoon of the 20th, we reached Demawund, a neat little place, situated near the foot of the mountain, from which its name is derived. The natives assign to it a most antique origin, and pretend that Zohauk (by some supposed to be the Nimrod of Scripture, whose name is still execrated in the East), made this his residence and seat of government. But whatever its renown may have been in days of yore, it is now only a large village, inhabited by five hundred Mahomedans, and sixty Jewish families. I called, soon after my arrival, on their rabbi, Mullah Ibrahim. He was in the house of Hajee Nazan, the richest Jew in the place, one of whose wives\* had been interred the day previously. I immediately proceeded there, and found the majority of the Jews assembled in a large room, reading the Mishna and Zohar, and partaking of the hospitality of their mourning host. I had no difficulty in introducing the subject of Christianity, as most of them were anxious to hear what I thought on the advent of Messiah, and the redemption and final happiness of our race. Of Christ they had never heard, and consequently were not a little amazed to find that the

\* The Jews in the East practise polygamy. I know some rich merchants in Bagdad who have three wives, and many rabbies who, without using the palliatives of the Talmud for the indulgence of their corrupt passions, have the same full complement.

doctrine of a coming redemption through the sufferings and death of the Messiah, like a bright and shining light, illuminated the pages of the Sacred Volume. The mullah observed that the rabbies held similar views ; but upon my inquiring who that being was, by whose justifying merits we were to be saved, he perceived that there was no other alternative, except the admission that Jesus was the Christ. I extricated him out of this perplexing labyrinth, by proving that there was only one Messiah predicted in the Bible, and that the same was to atone for sins, according to Daniel ix. 26, and to reign in conformity with the same prophecies (vii. 13). Several noted down all I said, and, leaving a few tracts I went away. In going to the caravanserai, six individuals invited me to their garden, close to the Jewish quarter. I accepted the invitation, and whilst they were reading the few copies of the Gospel I had with me, I fell asleep upon the grass, and enjoyed a refreshing rest for about an hour.

Late in the evening, four Jews, closely related to each other, visited me. They were, like most of their brethren, ignorant and uneducated, but docile, and willing to be instructed. I had a lengthened conversation with them on the holiness of God, sinfulness of man, and the great necessity of such a Saviour as infinite mercy has provided for us in the Gospel. Two of them were quite ready to leave their families and accompany me, an offer which I was obliged to decline. Before we separated they expressed a desire to hear me pray, and upon my request they all knelt down, and, with deep emotion, united with me in prayer to the Triune Jehovah. I believe this was the first Christian sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving ever offered in this remote place, and, oh! that speedily every mystery of iniquity and impiety might be swept away, and these wicked and dark places, where now self-deception and error are adored, become temples dedicated to light and knowledge, truth and holiness. My Jewish friends assured me most solemnly that they would daily pray in and through the name of Christ, and read the New Testament, which I had given them. May the Lord strengthen them in their resolution, and grant them grace to persevere.

Early in the morning I went to the largest of the two syna-

gogues. The report of my intention to preach had attracted every one to the place of worship, so that not an empty spot could be seen. The mullah, a kind and good man, objected to a formal address, but he invited me to the oratory, and politely said, "If you sit down, you can speak as long as you deem it advisable." I complied with his request, and assuming, like all the rest, a cross-legged position, made the gloomy walls of this synagogue, for the first time, re-echo with the name of Christ, and reverberate with the doctrines of the Gospel. My posture did not in the least diminish the effect of my discourse, nor induce any one to interrupt me. At the conclusion some one remarked that rabbinical comments were necessary, in order to understand the Bible. I showed them, by a few quotations, that the chachamim and their comments, instead of leading the mind to the acquisition of the truth, bewildered and diverted the thoughts from the true Fountain of light and life. I distributed some tracts and Gospels, and many Jews followed me to the caravanserai, to whom I sold Bibles, and gave a few copies of the "Old Paths."

In the evening we left Demawund for Cazveen, which we reached at noon, on Saturday, April 24th, having traversed the distance of fifty-two hours in less than three days. I intended, from this, to pursue my journey to Northern Persia and Coordistan; but both my Jewish and Christian servants were dangerously ill with fever, and the exertions of forced marches had also prostrated my own strength; I thought it, therefore, most prudent to return, *viâ* Hamadan, where I was well known, and, in case of any emergency, could obtain aid and assistance.

At sunset, on the 26th, I set out with my sick companions. The rest of two days had restored my energy and vigour. We generally travelled by night, and halted during the day, but having to fetch water, and cook for my helpless and murmuring attendants, I seldom found time to sleep; and when, on the 2nd of May, we reached Hamadan, I had scarcely strength, either to sit or stand.

Chacham Eliyahu, and many other Jews, gave me a most cordial welcome. I spent the greater part of my time in the

mullah's house, and saw several individuals who had heard the preached Gospel, and had read the books I gave them, not without benefit to their souls. The greatest obstacle is, that these persons dare not, without exposing themselves to most violent persecutions, and perhaps even to death itself, avow their convictions of the truth. We must, however, not despair, for He who in mercy has caused His Word to enter into the hearts of these perishing souls, will also smooth the way for their public profession of the crucified Saviour.

I found the atmosphere of Hamadan too oppressive and damp to protract my stay, and therefore made preparations to leave on the evening of the 4th. My Christian servant was again convalescent, but Yomtob was dangerously ill. I left him under the care of Chacham E——, who promised, for my sake, to attend him like a brother. The poor man reluctantly parted from me, and I confess that it was not without great pain I separated myself from a servant who had been with me in danger and difficulty, labour and toil, and who was the only companion with whom, during my long, tedious, night journeys, I could converse on the sacred text of the Bible. It was, however, a comfort for me to know that I left him with those who would watch over him in his illness, and attend to all his wants.

On May 7th, I arrived at Kermanshah, and alighted in a caravanserai. Many of the Jews soon visited me, and I found in my intercourse with them, that the vagaries and speculations in which some, when I last saw them had indulged, were supplanted by sound scriptural views and enlightened arguments. Thus the leaven of truth is spreading, and preparing the way of the Lord in this benighted land.

From Kermanshah to Bagdad I was obliged to take regular escorts, as no caravan would leave; the whole country, to the very gates of the town, being in a state of anarchy and confusion. We were several times pelted with stones, and fired at with muskets; and only four hours' distance from the city, we should have been plundered, and perhaps made prisoners, by a party of Shamar Arabs, had not a number of horsemen in the service of the Pasha providentially joined us.

Thus on the whole of this journey I experienced the guardian care of Him who has said, "Lo, I am with you alway ;" and if my humble efforts have in the least tended to rouse the Jews in Persia from their death-like apathy, to a sense of their spiritual danger, I will say, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy name be all the glory."

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## CONCLUSION.

### WHAT DO WE OWE TO THE JEW?

BEFORE I close this brief sketch of our labours in the interesting countries of Assyria, Media, and Persia, let me pause a moment and take a retrospective glance at the subject embodied in these pages; and whatever our views may be with regard to Israel's prospects and destiny, yet what heart is so cold, and what breast so insensible, as not to feel moved with pity and compassion at the sorrows and woes they have to endure in the eastern regions of their dispersion. Long, too long, has the Church been unmindful of her duty, and indifferent to the call of thousands of Jews, who with yearning solicitude implored her in the mournful accents of the Macedonian, "come over and help us!" The gushings of tender affection did not flow at their miseries, and the tear of Christian sympathy fall over their calamities: unblest and uncared for, the despised and shunned Israelite preserved his wearisome and desolate path; and unwarned, unatoned, and unforgiven, descended to the gloomy chambers of corruption. To trace the cause of this illiberality and antipathy to its primal source, would compel me to go back to ages over which memory would gladly cast the mantle of oblivion. Thank God, a better day has dawned upon the exiled tribes, and that narrow bigotry and inflexible intolerance which would doom a nation, destined in the inscrutable decrees of heaven to be still a blessing in the midst of the earth, to perpetual subjection and final destruction, has been superseded by the generous impulse of charity, and the disinterested benevolence of the Gospel. The agitated and tottering condition of the East, the heavings and throes of impending troubles and dangers in the West, and the progress of true religion and gospel-truth in both, have by their ominous import turned the tide of kindness and good-will,

in favour of the Jew. The eye which before only gazed upon him, through the thick veil of prejudice, now sees him, through the glowing golden visions of the prophets, and the bright and radiant vista of unborn glories, and unfulfilled promises. Christians everywhere begin to look upon the homeless wanderer with benignity and love; and the prayers which continually, like holy incense, ascend to the Father of us all, have already been answered by the first immortal fruits, the sure harbingers of a more abundant spiritual harvest. Such indications of returning mercy, legibly declare that Israel is still "beloved for the fathers' sakes;" and though we do not yet behold the realization of all our fond wishes and aspirations, nor see the streams of salvation in millennial plenitude watering every mountain-valley and desert-plain where the hot tempest of persecution has driven this mystic race, we have in the beams of divine light which are now gleaming on the widely scattered dwellings of Judah, a voice as it were from heaven sending down to us the blissful tidings of the speedy advent of the Lord and the approaching era of millennial glory.

Our work of faith and love is however not only fraught with life and eternal happiness to thousands who would probably never have heard of the Saviour, but it also gilds with hope the dark and gloomy scenes of this sin-bound universe, whose destined renovation hangs on the conversion and restoration of Israel. This grand truth, which displays the unbounded love and unfathomable goodness of the Eternal, is in most touching and sublime strains unfolded in the pages of prophecy, so, that already amidst the groans of this blessed creation,—the struggles, cares and toils of life, we watch, as it were, the rolling music of the spheres, to hear our globe echoing the long-expected anthem, "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

The whole dealings of God with the Jew warrant such a conclusion. When all the earth was immersed in darkness that might be felt; when the fatal influence of sin had eradicated out of the heart every rational, ennobling, and elevating sentiment—yea, when the great adversary had established his supreme sway over degenerate man, God made choice of Abraham



to proclaim His wisdom, power and sovereignty among the rebellious tribes. Jacob his grandson carried this sublime truth to Egypt, where his descendants by their superior morality and purer worship, rebuked the gross and irrational adoration of crocodiles, oxen and cats; and brought the whole battery of Pharaoh's vengeance upon the languishing and groaning captives. Moses, Joshua, and the Prophets, kept alive this vital doctrine, and by miracles and wonders which appealed to the living, and by emblems, types, and prophecies, which prefigured to succeeding generations Christ crucified, prepared mankind for the salvation to be revealed under the dispensation of the Gospel. And now, when the lines of darkness were to melt away before the rising beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the distant isles of the sea were to become living memorials of the power and grace of God; Providence selected not the learned and rich, the wise and renowned, but a few Jewish fishermen, who were commissioned to announce the tidings of mercy and the denunciations of wrath to the polluted nations of the earth. And were there ever such preachers as these despised Jews? Were there ever such zealous and efficient missionaries as these humble Galileans? Their path was thorny, and their conflicts painful, but they had a great object to accomplish; they had a divine mandate to obey, and careless both of the smiles and frowns, the allurements and indignation of the world, they pressed through every maze of opposition, difficulties, and impediments, and on the proudest monuments of refined polytheism, hoisted the standard of the crucified Redeemer. Revolutions great and wonderful have been achieved; projects vast and magnificent have been realized; but what can equal the moral change effected by ignorant fishermen? What offers a parallel in the history of the past and present to the amazing and marvellous reformation introduced by crude, unlettered publicans. The most perfect and polished systems of antiquity, which were interwoven, with every political, religious and social institution—which shed a fragrance of poetry around mountain and valley, fountain and grove, succumbed before the heart-piercing message of these divinely gifted orators. And if by the light of prophecy

we penetrate into the depths of the future, we have in the events long gone by a foreshadowing of the more glorious periods still to come. God's Holy Spirit accompanied the preaching of Jewish Apostles; and the corrupt and licentious creeds of Greece and Rome lay entombed under altars and shrines devoted to idolatry and fraud. God's Holy Spirit will again animate the zeal of Jewish Evangelists, and every dark scene of nature, every gloomy spot on earth, will become a tabernacle of the Lord, a paradise of the Holy One of Israel.

Our labours for the descendants of Abraham, whether thus viewed in the mirror of prophecy, or in the wounds and agonies of a compassionate Saviour, who died that Jew and Gentile might eternally live, must gain the sympathy and enlist the prayers of every sincere and devout Christian. It is a duty which Scripture enjoins and gratitude demands. Every believer, however unwilling and reluctant he may feel to acknowledge the obligation, stands, under God, indebted to Jewish instrumentality for the knowledge of salvation and the light of the Gospel. What Christian, amidst the fluctuations and vicissitudes of his earthly pilgrimage, has felt the tide of holy joy ebb back to his desponding heart, as he pondered and meditated on the sorrows and struggles, trials and temptations of the saints of old, without being reminded that the patriarchs and prophets were Jews? What Christian can contemplate that fathomless gulf, ever boiling and foaming with the surges of hell-fire, without recollecting that those zealous apostles who snatched him from the devouring waves, and caused his desolate soul to rejoice in God his Saviour, were Jews? Yea, what Christian can, through this veil of mortality, look up to God as his reconciled Father, to Christ as his "all-sufficient" Redeemer, and to heaven as his purchased inheritance, without remembering that the great Deliverer, who deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its chilly gloom, was born of a Jewish virgin, and clothed in the habiliments of a son of David? And what returns have Christians made for all the benefits which have flown to them through the channel of the injured Jew? Alas! the records of his history are written on his sorrowful countenance, and timid gaze,

on his bended gait and grovelling occupation, which still characterize him in most countries wherever his wandering feet have sought a shelter, a refuge, and a home! And yet after so many wars, massacres, plagues, and famines, behold this imperishable family, still a flourishing and numerous people. The voice of cursing, scorn, and contempt has pursued them for ages; but, though crushed, they were not annihilated, though driven to deserts and wilds, they have not been lost or destroyed. Every country has been to them an upas-tree, and still in every country they exist. The promises of God to their fathers lingers over them, and no device or scheme can contravene His will, or defeat His purpose. Nations great and mighty have become extinct and forgotten; tribes powerful and strong have disappeared and become amalgamated; but Israel will continue to grow and spread till his great mission is fulfilled, and the jubilee of the ransomed be ushered in amid the harmony of the golden harps, and the triumphant hosannas of all the sons of God.

But it may be said the Jews are an obstinate and unimpressible people, and our best endeavours for their welfare end only in withered expectations and grievous disappointments. Such selfish arguments flow more from the bosom in which the cold atmosphere of other days prevail, and former prejudices have not yet been eradicated, than from the generous impulse of charity, which compassionates the sinner, weeps over his hopeless prospects, and yearns with tender solicitude to guide him in the way of peace and everlasting life. Unfortunately, the demon of malice has too long paralyzed all efforts in behalf of the Jews, by such artful insinuations and unscrupulous misrepresentations; and thousands who fervently pray for the conversion of the Jews, have doubted in their minds, and questioned in their hearts, the possibility of the blessing which their lips implored. The Word of God sanctions no such sentiments, and warrants no such conclusions; it tells us that Jew and Gentile are under the curse of God's holy law, and that the blood of Jesus can alone cleanse, and the Holy Spirit alone sanctify the one or the other. And have we not sufficient ocular demonstrations of God's favour and benignity on our

work, to revive our languid emotions, and to dispel our innate apathy? Come with me, ye lukewarm and doubting, to the heights of Zion and the sacred hill of Calvary, and behold, on the very spot where infatuated mortals defied the Lord of life and glory, whole bands of Hebrews stretching forth their suppliant hands to the Saviour over whom their besotted forefathers exclaimed "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" Come with me to the Plain of Shinar, the birth-place of nations, and hear, above the murmurs of the Euphrates, and the clangour of hostile arms, a song of deliverance, and an anthem of redemption, far more glorious than those which described the fall of the sun of the morning, and the ruin of the golden city! Come with me to Persia, the land of Cyrus, where calamities the most terrible, and afflictions the most severe, have been the lot of Israel for ages; and, amidst the wail of distress and the cry of despair, the impassionate aspiration greets the ear, "Oh, Jesus! we long for the advent of the Messiah; and if Thou art indeed the Christ, raise our drooping spirits, and reveal this faintly-understood truth to our dull and heavy minds!" Yea, come with me, to the East and West, to Asia and Europe, and everywhere you will behold Rabbinism losing its ground, and Christianity taking deep root; error disappearing, and truth spreading far and wide.

In all places, and in all countries, the Jews are emerging out of the dreary shades of spiritual death, and bursting the prison-doors of their mental bondage. The system of tradition which, like a fatal incubus, crushed their faculties and fettered their intellect, has, in numberless communities, been entirely thrown off; whilst in others, formerly its strongholds, it is struggling hard for even a limited and restricted authority. In fact, the Lord, through the agency of our missions, and by the influence of His Holy Spirit, is awakening the whole Jewish body from their leaden slumbers; and thousands who never questioned the veracity of their creed, or exercised their minds on matters of faith, are now studying the Sacred Oracles, and, with anxious solicitude, inquiring after the good old path, which they and their fathers have so long forsaken.

But, while we have such cheering and encouraging demon-

strations of God's blessing upon our efforts, let no one rest satisfied with what has already been achieved. Let the reviving truth spread where its sounds have not yet been heard ; and let the holy fire be fanned into a flame, where it is already kindled. God, in his distinguishing mercy, has granted you the honour to commence this noble work, and now let not want of liberality and zeal for the Redeemer's glory arrest its progress. In your expansive charities, let the Jew find a refuge. His past history appeals to your sense of justice, and his future prospects to your strongest sympathies. "Lift up then your voices, ye watchmen on the walls of Zion, lift it up, be not afraid ; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your King !"

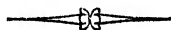
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